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LECTURES

ON

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

DELIVERED IN LONDON, MARCH, 1840.

BY

THE REV. HUGH M'NEILE, M.A.

MINISTER OF ST. JUDE'S CHURCH, LIVERPOOL.

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P R E F A C E.

THE circumstances which gave rise to the preparation and delivery of these Lectures, will be best understood by the following extract from the Seventh Report of the CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE SOCIETY.

“ Amidst these proceedings in reference to CHURCH EXTENSION, the Christian Influence Society have not omitted a continuance of their endeavours to attain such amendments in the working of the National Church Establishment, as may bring its ministrations to bear with increased energy upon the national population. It was apprehended that measures of this nature would be greatly forwarded and commended to public favour by the course of Lectures which was announced in last year’s Report, as intended to be delivered this season, by the Rev. Christopher Benson, Master of the Temple, and Prebendary of

Worcester, “ upon the excellence and value of the English National Church Establishment, together with the circumstances which impede its efficiency, and the best remedies for such defects.” But it is matter of deep regret to the Committee, that the Master of the Temple, from whom this important service was expected, has been prevented, by severe indisposition, from executing it during the present year. Upon this being announced to the Committee, in the end of the month of February, it became matter of much deliberation whether all idea of a course of Lectures, in the present season, should be abandoned ; or whether some other individual, qualified for the work, should be sought out. Upon the whole, it was deemed advisable to delay the matter entirely until another year ; the more especially, as it seemed probable that a course of Lectures, of a more popular character, and which would not supersede those originally contemplated by Mr. Benson, might possibly be brought forward in the present season, and become productive, under the Divine Blessing, of highly beneficial results. Under these impressions, the eyes of the Committee were directed to the Rev. Hugh M’Neile.”

• Were I at liberty to publish the correspondence which took place upon the occasion here referred to, it would exculpate me, in some degree at least, from the charge of rashness and presumption in

complying with the reiterated request of these zealous gentlemen. They are cordially desirous to promote the best interests of the church and the country. Their proceedings necessarily involve them in a considerable expenditure ; and I venture to avail myself of this opportunity, warmly to recommend their objects and funds to the support of churchmen.

I hope their expectations from the Master of the Temple may be realised ; and that a defence of vastly more wisdom and erudition, than I can make the slightest pretensions to, may be raised around our venerated Church Establishment.

March 25, 1840.

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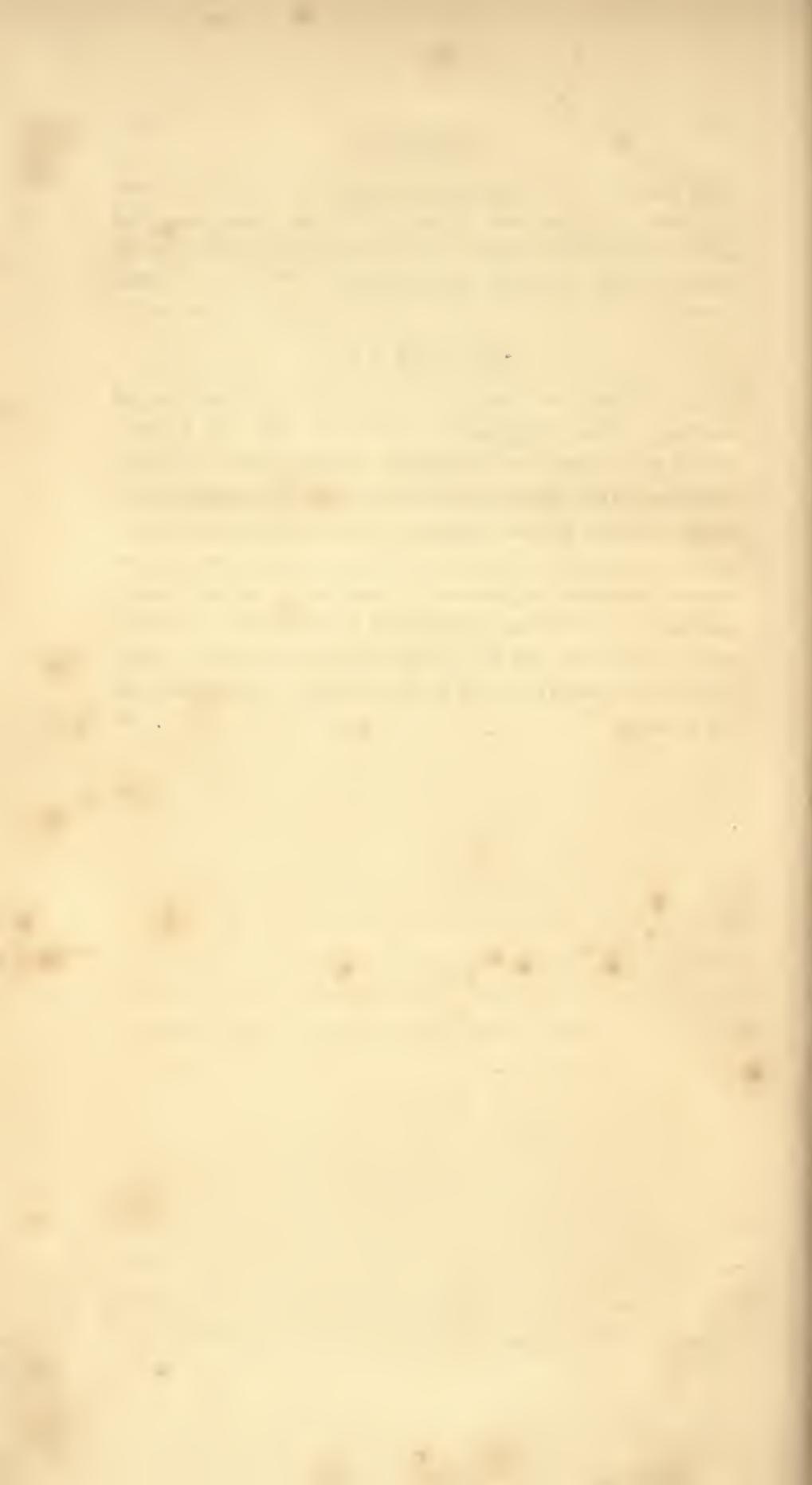
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LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION—ONLY DIVINE TRUTH WILL BEAR THE SCRUTINY OF THESE TIMES—TO BE MAINTAINED AND EXTENDED, OUR CHURCH MUST BE SHOWN TO BE NOT ONLY USEFUL, BUT SCRIPTURAL—MEANS ESTIMATED WITH REFERENCE TO THE END IN VIEW—SCRIPTURAL MEANINGS OF “THE CHURCH,” FOUR—THE CHURCH MYSTICAL, TESTIMONY OF HOOKER—THE CHURCH VISIBLE, DR. WARDLAW’S ARGUMENT ON THIS POINT EXAMINED—THE CHURCH LOCAL, “TELL IT TO THE CHURCH”—THE CHURCH COLLECTIVE—EPISCOPAL CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH—THE COMPREHENSIVELY SCRIPTURAL ASPECT OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

THERE exists a very general conviction that some measures must be adopted speedily, and on a national scale, for the instruction of the people of this country. The ascertained ignorance of multitudes has long been a subject of painful consideration to the thoughtful, and some late exhibitions of its fatal consequences have arrested the attention of even the habitually careless. Men of all political parties agree in the conclusion that something must be done, however widely they differ in their views as to the best mode of proceeding. The most obvious mode would be to

make use of a machinery which is already laid, largely though now inadequately, over the face of the country, and to communicate the required instruction through the instrumentality of our established church. We esteem this mode, not only the most obvious, easy, economical, and in every practical point of view safest and most efficient; this would be merely to claim precedence for it as one human arrangement, preferable to other human arrangements: but we occupy much higher ground, and for the fundamental principles of our ecclesiastical instrumentality, we claim the direct authority of the word of God

Accordingly, we solicit an extension, on a broad liberal national scale, of the framework of the church. This demand rouses, of course, the opposition of men who do not approve of our church, and also of men who, although they do approve of it themselves, and of its extension by those who prefer it, yet shrink from any step which would enlarge its efficiency, at the cost, in any the smallest degree, of those who conscientiously dissent from it. This feeling would be correct, and this argument sound, in the absence of divine authority.

Instead of extending the church, these persons propose a system of education, to become national, which shall combine, in secular instruction, the children of all parties, and keep so entirely aloof from everything sacred as not to interfere with the religious views of any. This, as naturally, rouses the opposition of those who consider the *mate-*

riel of man's intellectual constitution as so alienated from all that is good, that the direct cultivation of it is but placing a weed in a hothouse, and that consequently religious instruction, whose object and whose prerogative it is, to change the nature of the plant "to make the tree good," is the basis of all sound education, the only element which can render universal intelligence in secular things either a source of real happiness to the individual possessor, or compatible with the subordination and safety of the community.

But the controversy is not confined to this. Some of our opponents not only object to any extension of our established church, but demand its total extinction, alleging that its existence is a hindrance to the spread of true religion. In support of this assertion they have eagerly and eloquently attacked the constitution of our church as opposed to the holy Scriptures. This has removed the discussion from superficial circumstantial, from all that Dr. Chalmers called microscopic in our differences, to grapple with fundamental principles; a consequence in which we greatly rejoice: because it is our matured conviction, that to inattention and consequent want of information upon this vital point, may be traced our present perilous position. The number of intelligent men, who, after due inquiry, are deliberately hostile to our church establishment, is comparatively insignificant. But what they lack in numbers, they possess in activity and decision. They seem to think, and they certainly

say without hesitation or moderation, that our system is wrong; that as a church it is unscriptural, and as an establishment unjust: that it owes its origin and progress to priestcraft, and is now indebted for a lingering existence, to the strong-hold which priestcraft has given to prejudice, and the interested ambition and lordly pride of the owners and holders of its lucrative and distinguishing honours. In such bold and unhesitating language do they represent our church establishment as a nuisance of the dark ages, to be swept away before the rising progress of knowledge, and the manly decision of intrepid reformers.

This is an imposing tone, not because of its truth, but because of its courage. Courage is commanding; and this mode of speaking by our opponents, reiterated briefly, strongly, and very often without the trouble or embarrassment of even an attempt at proof, has produced its effects, even where such effects might have been least expected. It has excited enfeebling doubts in many, who little suspect it of themselves, but who nevertheless have been rendered lukewarm thereby. And now, it is not from the noise or strength or activity of our avowed assailants that we have real danger to apprehend: but when we hearken to the tone taken by many of our professed friends and defenders, then it is that our hearts tremble. When we mark their indecision provoking a fresh assault even at the moment they are engaged in a repulse: when we perceive that, tempted by a reputation for discretion and

judgment and moderation, they maintain a forbearance, both in word and deed, which is misconstrued into a betrayal of weakness, if not of disaffection ; defending our established church on the low grounds of her prescriptive title, her legal claim, her political and social usefulness, her comparative economy, (pleas which, however sensible in themselves, and sufficient in times past, when even non-conformists in detail were still advocates for the general principle of a national church, are not fundamental enough to endure the present scrutiny —bulwarks which, however valuable as outworks, are of man's construction, and may be of man's demolition,) but shrinking, to all appearance, from the higher and more commanding position of avowing her scriptural character, and challenging inquiry into her unchanging principles.

Hence a feeling is propagated that the defenders of our church have themselves some doubts about her character, and are in consequence but half-hearted in their advocacy. I cannot, therefore, but feel strongly that we are called to give all faithful diligence to vindicate fundamentally the SCRIP-TURAL standing of our church ; to distinguish between what she defines as essential to Christianity, and what she only adopts in preference for her own management in detail ; to show, by a candid avowal of our own views, that sincerity of attachment to her does not require rigid coincidence in the detailed grounds of that attachment ; and may therefore be found in men who interpret

variously many of her formularies ; and so to give courage to her friends, not to be ashamed or afraid to defend her, each in his own way. It would be a fatal mistake to withhold our advocacy against those who are without, until we can conduct it in detailed uniformity with all who are within. And if our adversaries point to the differences which exist amongst us, our answer is ready ; we are free-men, each exercising his own judgment, without any prostration, under arbitrary authority, upon a Procrustes bed of slavish uniformity ; and yet we have substantial unity : for whatever may be our differences in some respects, we all agree in loving and defending our holy and our beautiful house where our fathers worshipped.

Our *arminianism* in doctrine, for example, is such, that we can all sign, *ex animo*, her high, rigid, dogmatical, uncompromising articles : and our *calvinism* is such that we can all cordially enjoy her tender, fervent, penitential, affectionate liturgy.

Why should all the defenders of our church use exactly the same weapons ? No ! to insist on such sameness in our warfare, would be to cut down our army to a single regiment. We have no sympathy with those who would so narrow our ground. We desire (without wilfully wounding any fellow soldier, or readily believing that he intends to wound us, and at the same time, without allowing complaisance to any to enfeeble our own blow,) to war an honest straightforward warfare in defence of our well-beloved church. And we

are convinced that if her foundations can be shown to be scriptural indeed, and the secret misgiving upon this point, which has caused some to desert and many to stand neutral, can be removed ; we shall have nothing to fear from an assembly of English gentlemen, invested with the deep responsibility of a nation's confidence, a majority of whom are still actually members of the church, and can never so far forget their high and honourable calling, as to neglect the interests of truth and righteousness, the legitimate results of practical Christianity in its national application.

This view of the controversy in its present stage must plead my apology, if apology be needed, for entering with more minuteness into scriptural definitions, and dwelling more largely on the scriptural foundations, and consequent paramount claims of our church, than under other circumstances might be deemed suitable for a course of lectures like the present.

To this I may add, that because my distinguished predecessor in this chair felt it right to confine himself chiefly to the *practical* view of the question at issue, we have been taunted with our unwillingness to bring the matter to the direct light of revealed truth, and challenged with somewhat of boastful reiteration to come to the law and the testimony. We accept the challenge, and cordially rejoice in the assurance that, after all, nothing has the same extensive and permanent effect upon the

British public, as an honest appeal to the word of our God.

The true excellence of any system of means must be estimated mainly by reference to the end to be attained. Without clear and correct views of the ultimate design, it is manifestly impossible to form enlarged and adequate opinions upon the character or suitability of the incipient or progressive steps. It is equally obvious that any serious error or fostered prejudice with reference to the end in view, must seriously damage the judgment pronounced upon the means employed. This invites to a lofty contemplation ; for the first and highest object of the christian church is connected with the revealed purpose, and progressive work upon earth, of Almighty God.

In the divine purpose there is no progress. The end is present from the beginning, in absolute perfection. All that has been, that is, and that ever shall be, can but give back a response, a faithful echo to the comprehensive design which occupied the eternal mind, antecedent to the first exercise of creative power. *Of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things ! He hath made all things for himself.*

From this saying of the inspired king of Israel, that God made all things *for himself*, it is not to be imagined that creatures can in any way add to the essential glory or happiness of the Creator. His absolute eternal perfections render this impossible.

With Him all is infinite, and infinity excludes gradations. What then can creatures do, or be for Him? They can be channels through which the perfections of God shall flow forth out of himself into manifest exercise: they can be witnesses of the divine character thus manifested: they can be so many sounding-boards which shall prolong and reverberate from sphere to sphere, the praises of Him who spake and they were made, who commanded and they were created.

The performance of the divine purpose differs in this respect essentially from the purpose itself. It descends among creatures, and partaking so far of their infirmities, it becomes progressive, and is of course (until the last step shall be taken in it) incomplete. The part of it, in which we are most vitally concerned, is the salvation of sinful men. This expression, *the salvation of sinful men*, involves many truths, which, although essential to a right and adequate view of our subject, are scarcely suitable, beyond mere enumeration, for the present occasion.

Such are the creation of holy angels, each in individual completeness; the fall of some of them into rebellion against God with all its tremendous consequences; the creation of man, not as the angels in individual distinctness, but the whole race prospectively in one man, like a tree whose seed is in itself, so that God has never *created* a second man; the temptation of the aggregate man by a fallen angel; and the ruin of himself and his posterity by trans-

gression of God's commandment ; the resources of the Godhead, in coequal and coeternal persons, from the depth of which arose an interference on behalf of fallen man, at once righteous and merciful, upholding inviolate the justice of the divine administration, while it opens the hand and heart of the great Sovereign to the poor helpless rebel ; the salvation of sinful men in progress for four thousand years on the credit of the predetermined atonement by Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world ; the incarnation, or God manifest in the flesh, and the accomplishment by the wondrous person thus constituted, God and man in one Christ, of that great central work, in this world's history, to which, as predicted by the prophets, all who believed the word of God looked forward till it was done ; and to which, as recorded by the apostles, all who believe look back since it was done.

1. These believers, from the first and to the last inclusive, compose the church in its highest sense, the *church mystical*, called in holy Scripture *the body of Christ*.

To have clear views of this important branch of revealed truth, it is necessary to contemplate the component parts of this church in four classes —first, those who having finished their course of faith and patience upon earth, are now absent from the body and present with the Lord—secondly, those in the flesh who are now living by the faith of the Son of God—thirdly, those who are born of the flesh, and who shall, in God's good time, be born

again of the Spirit, but are not yet converted to God—and fourthly, those who are not yet born of the flesh, but are clearly seen and known of “Him who calleth things that are not, as though they were.”

I am aware that in stating this primary meaning of “the church,” I am encountering opposition in some minds; and have therefore cordial satisfaction in falling back upon what is usually considered high authority by the class of objectors now alluded to; and quoting the language of our own judicious *Hooker*, as at once a shield for myself against the imputation of novelty or rashness, and a defence for my argument against facility of refutation:—

“That church of Christ, which we properly term his body mystical, can be but one; neither can that one be sensibly discerned by any man, inasmuch as the parts thereof are some in heaven already with Christ, and the rest that are on earth, (albeit their natural persons be visible,) we do not discern under this property, whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. Only our minds by intellectual conceit are able to apprehend, that such a real body there is, a body collective, because it containeth a huge multitude; a body mystical, because the mystery of their conjunction is removed altogether from sense. Whatsoever we read in Scripture concerning the endless love and the saving mercy which God showeth towards his church, the only proper subject thereof is this church. Concerning this flock it is that our Lord and Saviour hath promised, ‘I

give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands." They who are of this society have such marks and notes of distinction from all others, as are not objects unto our sense; only unto God who seeth their hearts, and understandeth all their secret cogitations, unto him they are clear and manifest. All men knew Nathaneal to be an Israelite; but our Saviour piercing deeper, giveth further testimony of him than man could have done with such certainty as he did, 'Behold indeed an Israelite, in whom there is no guile.'¹

In the sight of God, the members of this mystical body, the component parts of this church, these objects of his "endless love and saving mercy," have ever been, in every age, wholly distinct from all the rest of mankind, in their privileges, their character, and their destiny.

It is not necessary to my present purpose, to prolong controversy upon this point, though the distinct mention of it was, as we shall see, quite indispensable. It is the only view of "the church" taken by some of our opponents; so that while it is wholly denied on the one hand, it is exclusively dwelt upon on the other. We are thus pressed into a two-fold opposition, while against one class of objectors we maintain that this view of the church is truth; and against another class (to whom we proceed now to address ourselves) we maintain that it is not the whole truth.

¹ Eccl. Pol., book iii. sect. i.

2. We present, then, for the serious consideration of religious dissenters, another scriptural meaning of "the church."

In every age of the world, at least since the days of Abraham, there has been a portion of mankind separated from all the rest, not only in the sight of God who searcheth the heart; but also in the sight of man, which is limited to the outward appearance. There has been a society instituted, all the members of which have received some visible token or badge, distinguishing them from all other men.

At least since the days of Abraham. The records of the antediluvian world are very brief, and do not supply detailed and unambiguous information upon this point. It is indeed recorded, that at a very early period "men began to call upon the name of the Lord,"² or, to call themselves by the name of the Lord. And a distinction is marked between the *sons of God*, and the *daughters of men*.³ But we are not instructed in the precise nature of that distinction, or whether it was accompanied by any outward token, or if so, in what that token consisted.

Since the institution of circumcision, however, the case is plain. A man of Mesopotamia, in no way distinguished from the surrounding idolaters, either by birth or early education,⁴ was selected by God⁵ to be the origin of a special society among men. That society was to wear first a family aspect in the

² Gen. iv. 26.

³ Gen. vi. 2, 4.

⁴ Joshua xxiv. 2, 3.

⁵ Isa. li. 2.

Third, the portion of the church of God militant then on earth.

The circumference of the second circle is described visibly within the first ; but the third is not described visibly within the second. The distinction between the second and third is decisive, but not manifest to man. *As seen by man, they form but one company, and so, though they are essentially distinct, they are called by one name.* This has been the occasion of much obscurity, of much confusion, and much consequent contention.

The baptized society in like manner contains not only members of the church of God in Christ, but also ungodly men who have neither part nor lot in the spiritual and eternal blessings of that church. Simon the sorcerer was baptized in the flesh, and therefore as truly a member of the *visible* society as Philip or Peter.

Thus there are two churches, or the church in two senses. The church visible, or baptized society, and the church spiritual, or the elect of God, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. This distinction is illustrated by another word, which has a close connexion with our present subject.

There is a radical affinity between the original words which are translated *church* and *called*. The *εκκλησια*, or church, is the assembly of the *κλητοι*, or called. The different applications of this expression are made clear and irresistible by the contexts wherein we find it. In St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians it is identified with the spiritual

election of God who have experienced the inward energy of the Holy Spirit rendering the truth of the Gospel effectual to their salvation; and who are contrasted with those, both Jews and Greeks, who heard the same truth with their outward ears, but rejected it “as a stumbling-block or foolishness.”¹

*We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, but they must have heard it, that is, they must have been called, as regarded the outward ordinance, in order to stumble at it, since it could have been no stumbling-block to such as never heard it: and to the Greeks foolishness, these also must have heard it with the outward ear, or it could not have become an object of their philosophic scorn. Yet, mark how these Jews and Greeks, thus proved to have been *called* outwardly, are put in contrast with THE CALLED in another sense—to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.*

In the twenty-second chapter of St. Matthew, on the contrary, the called are identified with the visible company assembled at the supper, containing hypocrites, and expressly contrasted with the election. Many are *called*, but few are *chosen*.²

The parable which our Lord winds up with these memorable words, is expressly to the purpose. After a prophetic announcement of the rejection of the Jews, the guests who had been first invited to the

¹ 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

² Matt. xxii. 14.

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² Matt. xxii. 14.

marriage, the king's servants are commanded to go into the high-ways, “ and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.”

They went and gathered all, as many as they found, “ both *bad* and *good*;” “ and the wedding was furnished with guests.”

To this wedding, the church is expressly likened by her Lord, and the conduct of the servants in gathering a mixed multitude, is not a device of their own, disapproved of by the master; but a dutiful compliance with the master's orders.

Here was a prophetic intimation of what was afterwards to be verified by obedience to the commandment, “ Go, and make disciples of all *nations*, baptizing them.” Here, therefore, we recognise plain scriptural authority for what our opponents in this question denounce as wholly anti-scriptural, a national church. It is undeniable that in scripture the visible company of the baptized is called the church: only then let the disciples of the Lord succeed in any one instance, in doing what they are commanded to aim at in every instance, that is, baptize a nation; and you have, in the fullest sense defended by the most strenuous supporters of our establishment, a national church. We shall see in the sequel, how this would affect the temporal support of the church.

It was of the church thus considered as a visible society, that the Jewish nation was a type: and here lies the root of the controversy between us and the most distinguished among modern dissenters.

One of their ablest, most enlightened, and eloquent writers, says, in a series of lectures delivered in this city last year, that the Jewish nation was a type of the spiritual or mystical church; and rejects as wholly untenable the notion of a christian church in any other sense than the “ holy nation, the peculiar people,” consisting of believers in Christ, or his spiritual subjects, in all countries under heaven.

His words are :—

“ The New Testament does not legislate for nations. There was no nation, or civil community, which it regarded as a church, and for which in this capacity it prescribed an ecclesiastical constitution. The only nation for which it legislated, was the “ holy nation, the peculiar people,” consisting of believers in Christ, or his spiritual subjects in all countries under heaven. Of this spiritual Israel, the ancient Israel was the predecessor, and the type. Herein consists the only true resemblance or analogy.” * * * * *

“ The very appointment of a religion for a civil community, if the avowed design be to place that community in a position at all resembling the Jewish, involves the presumptuous attempt at an impossibility,—that, namely, of converting a civil community into a church, and thus instituting a false analogy, and setting aside the true one; obliterating that between the typical and the true or spiritual Israel, and introducing what is unknown to the New Testament oracles,—the anomaly of a *nation of Christians*, as if that were the legitimate

and divinely intended counterpart to the nation of Israel.”³

“ If it be answered, that Christianity has now the same divine sanction that Judaism had of old,—we grant it;—but the question relates, not to the divine sanction of *Christianity*, but to the divine sanction of the *nationality* of Christianity. We deny that any such sanction can be produced. We have made our appeal, in support of this denial, to the only competent authority, the New Testament scriptures; and have endeavoured to show, that according to that only standard, the nation which has succeeded the Jews, and to which Christianity now belongs as its instituted system of faith and worship, is the ‘chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people,’ consisting of true believers in every country.”⁴

Much stress is laid on this; and, indeed, it seems indispensable for the supply of even an appearance of scriptural support to the dissenting system; but is it correct thus to represent the Jewish nation as a type of the church *mystical*? I assign the following reasons for thinking it incorrect.

First. The apostle Paul says, concerning the Jewish nation, “all are not Israel who are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children.”

From this language of the apostle, it is obvious that the Jewish nation contained two bodies, to be distinguished from one another. There was Israel

³ WARDLAW’s Lectures, pp. 107, 108.

⁴ Ib. pp. 155, 156.

as seen of man, consisting of all the seed of Abraham, all the circumcised ; and there was an inner Israel, as seen of God, consisting of all who truly trusted in Him. In the church mystical, there is no such distinction. All who compose it do truly trust in God. All are the church, who are of the church. And therefore the Jewish nation does not correspond to, and could not have been typical of, the church mystical.

Secondly. Concerning the church mystical it is true, as Dr. Wardlaw himself allows and reiterates, that they are all true believers : but concerning the Jewish nation, no such statement is true. They were not all believers. On the contrary, St. Paul tells us that the Gospel was preached to them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it : and St. Jude says, that the Lord having saved the Jewish people out of Egypt, afterwards destroyed *them that believed not*. Therefore the Jewish nation does not correspond to, and could not have been typical of, the church mystical.

Thirdly. The Jewish nation included a vast variety of character, from the piety of a Nathanael down to the profligacy of a Barabbas, and the deeper deadlier hypocrisy of an Annas or Caiaphas : but the church mystical contains only one description of character ; they all hear the voice of the heavenly Shepherd, and *follow him*. Therefore the Jewish nation does not correspond to, and could not have been typical of, the church mystical.

Fourthly. Concerning the church mystical, it is written that none of them shall perish. They are all, as Hooker said, objects of God's "endless love and saving mercy;" and a greater than any man said ; he said who is the faithful and true witness, the great Amen, who spake what he knew, and testified what he had seen ; he said, who walketh among the golden candlesticks and holdeth the stars in his right hand ; THE LORD JESUS said, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all, and none shall be able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." But concerning the Jewish nation it is written, as we have seen, that many of them perished, that God destroyed those among them who believed not. Therefore the Jewish nation does not correspond to, and could not have been typical of, the church mystical.

One great advantage of this reasoning is, that it not only excludes what is erroneous, but introduces and demonstrates what is correct.

We learn from it, that the type of the church mystical was the "chosen remnant" in Israel ; and that *the nation* was typical of the church *visible*, or company of the baptized. Thus St. Paul addresses the Corinthian branch of the church visible, as in a position analogous to that of the Jewish nation of old, and holds up the history of that nation as containing ensamples ($\tauύποι$, types) for their instruction. Among the baptized Corinthians so addressed, were

not only true believers, members of the church mystical ; but also a variety of unchristian characters, some who were causing divisions and contentions, some guilty of open immorality, some profaning the ordinances of the church to so fearful an excess as even to become intoxicated at the Lord's Supper, some abusing the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, some denying the resurrection of the body. Of such a company, the Jewish nation was indeed typical.

Thus, the only legitimate antitype of the Jewish nation, is precisely what we contend for, viz. a *visible* church, or company of baptized persons, which may, or may not, be of national dimensions, but which contains all varieties of individual character.

At Corinth, when St. Paul wrote, it did not include the whole population. There were still heathen idolaters there ; but we cannot doubt that the apostle, acting under the commission of his Lord to make disciples of *nations*, desired to bring them all in, requiring, of course, a profession of their faith, but unable to command the reality, or in all cases with certainty to detect the want of it. This corresponds, in every particular, with the aspect and position of our own national church ; and on the strength of this scriptural argument, I feel justified in reverting to the strong language of Dr. Wardlaw, and saying, that to deny the appointment of a religion for a community, with the avowed design of placing that community in a position resembling the Jewish ; and to assert that the Jewish nation was typical of true believers in Christ, involves a

presumptuous attempt to institute a false analogy, and to set aside the true one ; to obliterate that between the circumcised and baptized nations, and to introduce what is unknown to the sacred Scriptures—the anomaly of a *nation* containing all variety of characters, both good and bad, set forth as the legitimate and divinely intended counterpart of the true spiritual church of God, the Lamb's wife, without spot or blemish or any such thing.⁵

⁵ “ But we speak now of the *visible* church, whose children are signed with this mark, *one Lord, one faith, one baptism*. In whomsoever these things are, the church doth acknowledge them for her children ; them only she holdeth for aliens and strangers, in whom these things are not found. For want of these it is that Saracens, Jews, and infidels, are excluded out of the bounds of the church : others we may not deny to be of the visible church, as long as these things are not wanting in them. For apparent it is, that all men are of necessity either Christians, or not Christians. If by external profession they be Christians, then are they of the visible church of Christ ; and Christians by external profession they are all, whose mark of recognisance hath in it those things which we have mentioned, yea, although they be impious idolaters, wicked heretics, persons excommunicable, yea, and cast out for notorious impropriety. Such withal we deny not to be the imps and limbs of Satan, even as long as they continue such. Is it then possible, that the selfsame men should belong to the synagogue of Satan, and to the church of Jesus Christ ? unto that church which is his mystical body—not possible : because that body consisteth of none but only true Israelites, true sons of Abraham, true servants and saints of God. Howbeit of the visible body and church of Jesus Christ those may be, and oftentimes are, in respect to the main parts of their outward profession, who in re-

We renew our appeal with confidence to our Lord's parables, where we find, on the point now

gard of their inward position of mind, yea, of external conversation, yea, even of some parts of their very profession, are most worthily both hateful in the sight of God himself, and in the eyes of the sounder part of the visible church most execrable. Our Saviour, therefore, compareth the kingdom of heaven to a net, whereunto all which cometh, neither is nor seemeth fish. His church he compareth to a field, whose tares, manifestly known of all men, do grow intermingled with good corn; and even so shall continue till the final consummation of the world. God hath had ever, and ever shall have, some church visible upon earth."—*Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity*, book iii. § 2.

The scriptures are not forgotten which say, "by their fruits ye shall know them," and "put away from among yourselves that wicked person" But everything is comparative. These and similar statements extend only to such fruits, and such wickednesses, as are palpable to the eye of man, and scandalising to the community: and in such cases, every minister of our church has full liberty to put away from among his communicants, that wicked person.

The Rubrick prefacing our Communion Service, says:—

"*So many as intend to be partakers of the holy communion shall signify their names to the curate, at least some time the day before.*

"*And if any of those be an open and notorious evil liver, or have done any wrong to his neighbours by word or deed, so that the congregation be thereby offended; the curate, having knowledge thereof, shall call him and advertise him, that in any wise he presume not to come to the Lord's table, until he hath openly declared himself to have truly repented and amended his former naughty life, that the congregation may thereby be satisfied, which before were offended; and that he hath recompensed the parties, to whom he hath done wrong; or at least declare*

before us, an accurate prophetic delineation of our own national ecclesiastical position.

The Lord's servants here in England, the ministers of his church, went into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests; the nation was baptized. It is not till the King himself comes to see the guests, that there can be a palpable *manifestation* of the true sons of God. An attempt (originating often in the most pious and devoted intentions, a zeal for God but not according to enlarged knowledge) to supersede this prerogative of the returning Saviour, and to separate now a visible company of worshippers which shall also be a pure company: in other words, an attempt before the harvest to re-

himself to be in full purpose so to do, as soon as he conveniently may.

"The same order shall the curate use with those betwixt whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign; not suffering them to be partakers of the Lord's table, until he know them to be reconciled. And if one of the parties so at variance be content to forgive from the bottom of his heart all that the other hath trespassed against him, and to make amends for that he himself hath offended; and the other party will not be persuaded to a godly unity, but remain still in his frowardness and malice: the minister in that case ought to admit the penitent person to the holy communion, and not him that is obstinate."

These are our instructions. We are bound to go thus far; and further than this, no man can go without arrogating a discernment of spirits with which it has not been the will of God to endow his church.

move the tares, in defiance of the significant prohibition, “lest ye root up also the wheat with them,” is the great root of all sectarianism. The King will indeed separate, and truly tremendous is the prospect he has given us of the division between the baptized only, and the saved also ; between the visible and the mystical church. *Many are called,* (even whole nations,) *but few are chosen.*

3. There is a third scriptural application of the expression “the church.” It is used to denote any subdivision of these outwardly called and baptized persons : even a subdivision so small as might assemble in a private house. Hence we read, not only of the church, but also of *churches*. Some persons appear so jealous of what they conceive to be the visible unity of the church, that they shrink from the use of the word in the plural number ; as if the bare admission of the existence of more churches than one, involved heresy and schism. Not so, however, the inspired writers. “Then had the *churches* rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria.” “And when they had ordained them elders in *every church*.” “The “churches of Christ salute you.”⁶ “The churches of Asia salute you.”⁷ Seven of these are enumerated by name in the Apocalypse ; and it is worthy of observation, that while the church of God was confined to one nation, its emblem in the Tabernacle was *one* candlestick with seven burners ; but when it was spread abroad among the nations, its emblem

⁶ Rom. xvi. 16.

⁷ 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

as presented in vision to St. John, was *seven* candlesticks, each with its own burner.⁸ The unity of the circumcised society was geographical, ceremonial, formal. It was, in truth, strict unswerving uniformity in every particular of every rite. There was but one form, and one place, of acceptable offering unto God. The unity of the baptized society is not so. Not geographical obviously: not ceremonial and formal, because forms and ceremonies not being ordained in detail by God himself, “ have been diverse, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men’s manners; so that nothing be ordained against God’s word.”⁹

⁸ Exod. xxv. 31—37 ; Comp. Rev. i. 12—20.

⁹ Art. xxxiv.

“ But we must note, that he which affirmeth speech to be necessary amongst all men throughout the world, doth not thereby import, that all men must necessarily speak one kind of language; even so, the necessity of polity and regiment in all churches may be held without holding any one certain form to be necessary in them all: nor is it possible that any form of polity, much less of polity ecclesiastical, should be good, unless God himself be the author of it. *Those things that are not of God, (saith Tertullian,) they can have no other than God’s adversary for their author.* Be it whatsoever in the church of God, if it be not of God, we hate it. Of God it must be; either as those things sometimes were, which God supernaturally revealed, and so delivered them unto Moses for government of the commonwealth of Israel; or else as those things which men find out by help of that light, which God hath given them unto that end. The very law of nature itself, which no man can deny but God hath instituted, is not of God, unless that

Some of the subdivisions which were dignified by the apostles with the name of churches, were very

be of God, whereof God is the author as well this latter way as the former. But forasmuch as no form of church polity is thought by them to be lawful, or to be of God, unless God be so the author of it, that it be also set down in Scripture ; they should tell us plainly, whether their meaning be that it must be there set down in whole, or in part. For if wholly, let them show what one form of polity ever was so. Their own to be so taken out of Scripture, they will not affirm ; neither deny they that in part, even this which they so much oppugn, is also from thence taken. Again, they should tell us, whether only that be taken out of Scripture, which is actually and particularly there set down ; or else that also, which the general principles and rules of Scripture potentially contain. The one way they cannot so much as pretend, that all the parts of their own discipline are in Scripture ; and the other way their mouths are stopped, when they would plead against all other forms besides their own ; seeing the general principles are such, as do not particularly prescribe any one, but sundry may equally be consonant unto the general axioms of the Scripture. But to give them some larger scope, and not to close them up in these straits ; let their allegations be considered, wherewith they earnestly bend themselves against all, which deny it necessary that any one complete form of church polity should be in Scripture. First, therefore, whereas it hath been told them, that matters of faith, and in general, matters necessary to salvation, are of a different nature from ceremonies, order, and the kind of church government ; and that the one is necessary to be expressly contained in the word of God, or else manifestly collected out of the same, the other not so ; that it is necessary not to receive the one, unless there be something in Scripture for them ; the other free ; if nothing against them may thence be alledged. Although there do not appear any just or reasonable cause to reject or dislike of this ; nevertheless, as it is not easy to speak to the contention of minds exulce-

small. They were assemblies, meeting in private houses. "Greet the church that is in their house."¹

rated in themselves, but that somewhat there will be always which displeaseth; so herein for two things we are reproved. The first is *misdistinguishing*, because matters of discipline and church government are (as they say) matters necessary to salvation, and of faith, whereas we put a difference betwixt the one and the other. Our second fault is *injurious dealing* with the Scripture of God, as if it contained only the principal points of religion, some rude and unfashioned matter of building the church, but had left out that which belongeth unto the form and fashion of it; as if there were in the Scripture no more than only to cover the churches' nakedness, and not chains, bracelets, rings, jewels to adorn her; sufficient to quench her thirst, to kill her hunger, but not to minister more liberal, (and as it were) a more delicious and dainty diet. In which case our apology shall not need to be very long.

"The mixture of those things by speech, which by nature are divided, is the mother of all error. To take away therefore that error which confusion breedeth, distinction is requisite. Rightly to distinguish, is by conceit of mind to sever things different in nature, and to discern wherein they differ. So that if we imagine a difference where there is none, because we distinguish where we should not, it may not be denied that we misdistinguish. The one trial whether we do so, yea or no, dependeth upon comparison between our conceit and the nature of things conceived. Touching matters belonging to the church of Christ, this we conceive, that they are not of one sort. Some things are *merely* of faith, which things it doth suffice that we know and believe: some things not only to be known, but done, because they concern the actions of men. Articles about the Trinity, are matters of mere faith, and must be believed. Precepts concerning the works of charity, are matters of action, which to know, unless they be practised, is not enough. This being so clear to all men's understanding, I somewhat marvel

¹ Rom. xvi. 5.

"Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with *the church* that is in their house."² (See also Col. iv. 15, and Philemon 2.)

Under this meaning of the word church, must be considered that grievously tortured exhortation of our Lord, recorded in Matt. xviii. : "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone ; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." This is the simplest way of procuring reconciliation, and preserving peace with your brother. "But if," from temper or any other unhappy cause, "he will not hear thee," then the next step is, "take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto *the church*." What church ? The whole baptized society ? Absolutely, physically impossible. How could a Christian at Lystra, or Antioch, or Iconium, tell his grievance to the baptized brethren at Crete, or Carthage, or Rome ? If, therefore, it be alleged that they especially should think it absurd to oppose *church government*, a plain matter of action, unto matter of faith, who know that themselves divide the gospel into doctrine and discipline. For if matters of discipline be rightly by them distinguished from matters of doctrine, why not matters of government by us as reasonably set against matters of faith ? Do not they under doctrine comprehend the same which we intend by matters of faith ? Do not they under discipline comprise the regiment of the church ? When they blame that in us, which themselves follow, they give men great cause to doubt that some other thing than judgment doth guide their speech."—*Eccles. Pol.*, book iii. § 2 & 3.

² 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

that our Lord in this place meant the universal church throughout all the world, he is represented as exhorting a Christian, under painfully trying circumstances, connected with his personal intercourse with his brother, to do what it was utterly impossible for him even to attempt to do, thus mocking the misery of his disciple, and rendering his own exhortation nugatory. Surely an interpretation necessarily involving such consequences must be relinquished as untenable.

“Tell it to the church!” What church? If it be alleged that our Lord intended *the ministers* of the church in that place, in their capacity as ministers, then he is represented as constituting his ministers judges of secular trespasses: for it should be carefully noticed that the case of supposed dispute is one of individual *trespasses*, and not of spiritual controversy. Now to allege that he thus constituted his ministers judges, *as ministers*, is to say that he commissioned them to do what under similar circumstances he refused to do himself.

“One of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.” Here, in a case of alleged trespass, the matter is brought before Jesus: “and he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?”³

Tell it unto the church. What church? Why, clearly that subdivision of the baptized society which is within your reach, the church *local* consisting

³ St. Luke xii. 13, 14. This would not exclude the friendly co-operation of the minister with others, as peace-makers.

of your brethren in your house, or neighbours in your town. We have already seen that there were many such churches, and here we have a direction given to the members of every Church, to submit matters of individual secular difference to christian arbitration, in order to attain by that means to an amicable settlement, and so to avoid public litigation.

In harmony with this natural unstrained interpretation of our Lord's words, we find St. Paul writing to the Corinthians. "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints ? I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man amongst you ? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren ? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers." 1 Cor. vi. 1, 5, 6. If, indeed, christian arbitration were obstinately rejected, then he who so offended was no longer treated as a brother, and might be prosecuted or resisted, like "a heathen man, or a publican." If he neglect to hear the Church, the last effort of *brotherly* treatment is proved to be in vain, and then he is to be treated as though he were not a brother, let him be unto you as a heathen man, and a publican.

If it be urged that under this head the Church of England is condemned, seeing the perpetual litigation that goes on among her members, I most freely admit that the members of our church individually are thus condemned ; and I would most

strenuously urge the application of the apostle's condemning language to the Corinthians, "There is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another :" but with equal strenuousness I would deny that the constitution of the church itself is condemned. On the contrary, nothing can be more conducive to the quiet prevention of litigation, than the established order for which we plead. In matters ecclesiastical this is eminent : witness the amount of harmony and decorum throughout the thousands of our parishes, rarely, very rarely broken by a single instance of strife : as contrasted with the scenes of rivalry and contention, in and about dissenting chapels, too frequently and painfully protruded upon public attention. In matters of private and relative misunderstanding, threatening disputation, it is impossible to estimate the amount of peaceful forbearance which our church has ministered, and does daily minister, to her true and faithful children, and by their means to extending circles of domestic life. Wherever the ministrations of our church are brought duly to bear upon a neighbourhood, peacemakers are multiplied. Were those ministrations universal, we would approximate to a condition in which there would be no litigation, no cause for litigation, in the land. Here again we repeat, and urge with affectionate earnestness, our petition for a vigorous and adequate extension of our means of christian instruction and christian influence, that we may, by the grace of God working thereby, advance nearer and nearer to that

happy condition of genuine churchmanship, which, though it must still fail to identify the baptized with the spiritually converted, would so far identify them with the outwardly peaceful and forbearing, as to render the offices of our courts of law all but sinecures.

4. There is yet a fourth use of the word church, whose claim to be accounted scriptural demands our best attention.

It is used to signify a geographical combination of subdivisions, or congregations of the baptized, each having its own minister, and all under the general superintendence of one chief pastor. This meaning is denied by all who reject as unscriptural the episcopal constitution of the christian church. In arguing in defence of it, I am not actuated by any hostility against them, or any of them. Far otherwise : if I could devise terms plain enough to express unequivocally what seems to me to be the truth of God, and at the same time mild enough to avoid the slightest wound to the feelings of any man, such are the terms I would prefer to use. I feel that I speak in kindness, and may therefore claim to be heard with candour.

I might argue from the fact, capable of detailed proof, that episcopacy was universal at the time of the Reformation. I might show the estimation in which it was generally held, from the recorded reluctance of the reformers in Germany, Switzerland, and Scotland, to depart from it ; I might call attention to what is demonstrable from their writ-

ings, that they would not have departed, had their bishops, like ours, *led* the Reformation instead of resisting it. The conduct of the German, Swiss, and Scotch bishops induced the people, and some of the clergy, too hastily to identify prelacy with popery.⁴ The line taken by our own bishops, es-

⁴ See Sinclair's Dissertation on the Church of England, p. 14, where, after many pertinent quotations from the writings of the reformers, the argument is thus stated—“The veneration for episcopacy entertained at first by persons whom necessity compelled to the adoption of a different system, could not be expected to continue long. Hostility to the Church of Rome would naturally be increased by opposition and persecution. It would seem desirable, in the tumultuous conflict, not only of words, but frequently of the sword; when strife not only raged in the polemic theatre, but in the field of blood; and when, to a multitude of sufferers by inquisitorial torture, in the dungeon, on the scaffold, or at the stake, were added the victims of open war; to remove as far as possible, both in doctrine and in discipline, from that detested communion. It would also be thought expedient, by persons thus severely tried, to stand on higher ground, with respect to church polity, than the ground of mere necessity; and to make some show of argument from Scripture, or from primitive antiquity, in behalf of the new constitution which had been devised. Accordingly, many of those very persons whose writings have been quoted, spoke afterwards with far less favour of the ancient system for which they originally professed and felt so much esteem. The enmity of their disciples grew more and more decided and unequivocal. The authority of bishops was represented as a presumptuous encroachment on the rights and privileges conveyed to presbyters by the apostles. Popery and prelacy were declared to be so closely in alliance, as even to be virtually synonymous. For the space of above two centuries and a half, up to our present times, a regular system of aggres-

pecially by the Primate and the Bishops of London and Worcester, taught a very different lesson, and, under the good hand of God, won for England the inestimable blessing of a church reformed in doctrine, without being revolutionised in government.

But no arguments, derived from any later source than the Scripture, will have full effect upon the class of objectors to whom I now wish to address myself, and against whose perpetual and imposing appeal to the Bible I am most anxious that our friends should be armed.

To the Bible then let us go. In Acts xix. we read of a rapid and extensive increase of the christian church in the city of Ephesus. “ And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus: and fear fell on them all, and the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many also of them which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed.” (verses 17—20.)

Compare with this the facts, that they had then no large public buildings for divine worship, that

sive warfare has been maintained by the scholars and successors of Calvin, against that very form of church government, respecting which we have seen their great master declaring, that the man was worthy of all condemnation, who should not reverently and with the utmost deference receive it.”

the pagan authorities were too jealous of their own fostered superstitions, and too powerful to allow the believers in Jesus of Nazareth to carry on their worship in one large company in the open street ; and ask what must have been the consequence to the Christians ? Where and how could their increasing multitudes have worshipped the Lord their God ? Surely the answer is, *in private houses* ; an answer deducible from the circumstances of the case, and confirmed by the repeated mention of churches in families.

Thus a multiplication of congregations was rendered inevitable. This is a first step. For the second we refer to Acts xx., where we read of the elders or presbyters of the church of Ephesus assembling at Miletus to receive the apostle Paul's farewell charge. "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church." (ver. 17.) That these were the ministers of congregations is evident from the 28th verse, where he addresses them as those whose office it was to take heed to the flock, to feed the church of God. Their exact number is not specified, but it is obvious there was a company of them ; for it is written, verses 36, 37, "And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him." We see, then, that there existed at Ephesus thus early a company of christian teachers ; and we have already seen the necessity that existed for a company of christian congregations, meeting in different places.

So far our statement will probably not have encountered any opposition. Observe then the state of things at Ephesus. According to the views and arguments of certain dissenters, there were at Ephesus a number of independent churches, each having its own pastor; and it would have been corrupt, and bigoted, and intolerant, a popish assumption, an anti-scriptural abomination, and if there be any other description of indignant opprobrium, for any one individual to have claimed pastoral authority over all the Christians at Ephesus, both ministers and people, combining them all into one church, and calling himself their chief. But what saith the Scripture ?

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Lord Jesus Christ himself said to the apostle John, in the Island of Patmos. At whatever period we date the banishment of St. John, it cannot be reasonably denied, that during his banishment the state of things in the city of Ephesus was such as we have now described it. We have the high advantage of hearing the Lord himself speak of it, “ Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus, write.” (Rev. ii. 1.)

I lay no stress upon any criticism with regard to the special meaning of the word angel ; all I claim from this is the selection of some *individual* whom the Lord calls, not an angel, or a presbyter of a church at, or in, Ephesus, but *the angel of the church of Ephesus*. This is no quibble of undue stress upon English articles, or prepositions. The original is $\tau\omega\ \alpha\gamma\gamma\delta\omega\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \text{Εφεσινης}\ \epsilon\kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$, and the only suggested alteration in any manuscript substitutes for

της Εφεσινης, τω εν Εφεσω, making the designation of *an individual*, if possible, more pointed.

The question is, then, Was this intended for one only of the many congregations, each with its own pastor, which we have already proved to have been in Ephesus at the time ? Or was it intended for the geographical combination of congregations, combined as one church under one chief pastor or angel ? If for one only congregation and pastor, then how could it have been ascertained for which ? To which of the independent ministers at Ephesus could the apostle have sent it ? How could he have made the invidious selection when all were on a perfect equality, all equally presbyters, or equally bishops, or equally angels ? And if he had sent his Lord's message, without selecting and naming an individual ; to what endless rivalry, confusion, and contention, would the various congregations and pastors have been incited ?

If, on the contrary, our Lord's address was intended for the geographical combination of congregations, considered as one church, under *one chief pastor*, (and this is the obvious meaning of the words, when compared with the circumstances of the case,) then, in the selection of one pastor, who is addressed by Christ himself as THE ANGEL of the Ephesian church, in which there were many pastors, we have, on the direct authority of the New Testament, (the only available document in the controversy, our opponents themselves being the judges,) a distinct and pointed announcement of that very constitution of episcopal superintendence which

characterises our national church to this day. It is such a limited combination of subdivisions, that I venture to designate as the church *collective*, as distinguished from the church universal or catholic.

Here an objection occurs. We shall be asked, Why, if one chief pastor be invested with such authority, was not the angel of *the church of Asia* addressed? And why should there have been seven angels, and seven churches, each collective of several congregations?

I reply, those early Christians, being for the most part poor men, and all persecuted by the existing authorities of paganism, had not the power of extensive communication, nor consequently of extensive combination. But the principle is as truly established by the combination of half-a-dozen congregations and pastors in one city, as it would be by the most extensive national combination. When men possessing temporal power and riches were baptized into the church, the combination would naturally enlarge itself; and when a king was baptized, the combination would as naturally pervade his dominions. But the original extent of it was likely to be just what we allege it was, limited; as all combinations of poor and persecuted persons must be. The limit to them was a city, or small district, but the principle was the same.

And further, a most important object was hereby attained, this infirmity of the early Christians being the Lord's instrumentality for the purpose.

The limitation which was rendered inevitable by

their necessities, led to the *subdivision of episcopacy* in the church of the baptized.

It is inconclusive to object to this, that the Lord could at once have fixed the entire constitution of his church independent of any such process of human infirmity. Doubtless he could; and he could have converted to the faith of Christ the Roman emperor, and the Roman empire, without the tedious process of human means. But this is not his mode of dealing with our world. In everything he uses means; and it belongs to the contemplations of wisdom, to mark how the free actions of men, and the apparently casual occurrences of history, are all naturally subservient to the revelation of his will, and the accomplishment of his purpose.

In our Lord's address to the angel of the church of Ephesus, we have the principle of episcopacy established; in his address to seven angels of seven churches in Asia, we have his sanction for the subdivision, the geographical subdivision, of episcopal superintendence; and more than this, we have the foreseen usurpation of a primacy, or universal bishop over the whole church, pointedly condemned. There is an angel over all the pastors in *Ephesus*: this excludes independency. There is not an angel over all the pastors in *Asia*: this excludes popery.

All this is strongly corroborated by the language of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus.

“ As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some, that they teach no other doctrine;

neither give heed to fables, and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith; so do." — (1 Tim. i. 3, 4.) Here this individual is charged by the apostle with the superintendence of the *doctrine* taught in that city. He is reminded of the gift of God that is in him, by the putting on of the apostle's hands. (ii. 6.) He is exhorted himself not to lay hands suddenly on any man: and in receiving accusations against an elder, to beware that he did not do so, except in the presence of two or three witnesses. (1 Tim. v. 22. 19.) It is worthy of remark, that whilst St. Paul addresses such language to the Ephesian bishop, nothing of the sort occurs in his epistle to the Ephesian church.

Titus is reminded that the apostle's object in leaving him in Crete was, that he should set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city. And with regard to heretics, such as the apostle foresaw would arise, the bishop of Crete is instructed not to proceed against them without admonition once and again: but that after the first and second admonition, he should reject them. (i. 5. and iii. 10.)

Now, according to our views of the episcopal constitution of the christian church, all this is easy, natural, consistent, harmonious. We wrest nothing, we conceal nothing, we explain away nothing of the sacred document. But the opponents of this episcopal constitution do certainly seem to us to require some ingenuity in order to evade the pressure of such scriptural argumentation. Let me ask—

Suppose a gracious renewal of miraculous communications from the Lord to his people, and suppose some favoured servant to receive an inspired message, in terms similar to that we have been considering, addressed “to the angel of the church of London,” we are so scripturally constituted, that we would have no hesitation in at once selecting the individual to whom it should be forwarded; but who is the *primus inter pares*, to whom the dissenters would send it?

And here I desire, in a few words, before I conclude, to point out the essential difference between the polity of the Church of Scotland in this respect, and that of the Independent Dissenters. Does the Church of Scotland recognise the independence of every separate congregation as a church in itself, so that the pastor thereof may follow his own devices in doctrine and discipline, without being subject to authoritative reproof, and even rejection? Certainly not. The proceedings of the General Assembly, during the last few years, have proved beyond a question, that the Scotch church possesses a very effective episcopacy in fact, though she has discarded it in name. What is the General Assembly, with its delegated commission, but a sort of collective episcopacy? Its censorship of doctrine, its watchfulness over the details of established discipline, its grave admonitions of offenders, and after the first and second admonitions in vain, its authoritative rejection of heretics and schismatics—these are precisely the functions of the episcopate.

The difference between this and our own church lies in the name and republican form which they have given to an institution which certainly originated in individuals, and not in assemblies; but the authority, in its effect upon the geographical section of the church, is substantially the same. Uniformity in doctrine and discipline is maintained. The authority of a superior tribunal is recognised by the pastors throughout the realm; and thus what I must call, without intending any offence, the heterogeneous patchwork and feudal insubordination of independency is excluded.

And now I feel emboldened, in the combined light of these several scriptural applications of the true church, to declare, and I trust without making my conclusion longer than my premises when compared with facts will legitimately vindicate; that the Church of England, in her clear doctrinal recognition of the church mystical, her national comprehensiveness as the church visible, her christian arbitration (though not to the extent we could wish, yet who can estimate its amount?) as the church local, and her episcopal constitution and diocesan superintendence as the church collective, is comprehensively in accordance with the word and will of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father.

LECTURE II.

THE APPOINTMENT AND SUCCESSION OF THE MINISTERS OF THE CHURCH — THE APOSTOLICAL COMMISSION — THE POWER OF THE KEYS, WHAT? THE PRACTICE OF THE APOSTLES APPEALED TO FOR A DECISION—IN WHAT SENSE ST. JOHN XX. 23, MAY BE USED IN THE ORDINATION OF MINISTERS—DEPARTURE FROM APOSTOLICAL DOCTRINE—COMPLETION, MEANTIME, OF THE INSPIRED CANON—PREDICTED APOSTASY OF THE CHURCH—PROMISED PRESERVATION OF THE CHURCH IN TRUTH AND HOLINESS—HARMONY OF THESE—THE GRACE OF GOD MAGNIFIED IN THE ARRANGEMENT.

ON occasions like the present, there is a strong temptation to feel impatient under protracted examination of holy Scripture. The source of that impatience is a secret craving for something more presently, practically, and perhaps politically exciting. To yield to this is to hazard a superstructure, without having duly and carefully made good a foundation. Such is proverbially the description of a foolish builder. Similar to such folly would be an attempt to point out the duty of man (whether sovereign or subject) towards the church, without having examined carefully the nature and

claims of the church itself. We must give diligence to investigate what God has done and said upon the subject, before we can hope to discuss, with power or profit, what men of any rank or condition of life ought to do. We are all deeply interested in the duty of professedly christian rulers, touching the church ; but there is a preliminary inquiry in our way.

If there be no visible society on earth constituted fundamentally as a church, according to the mind and will of God as revealed in the Bible ; then, civil rulers, who are ordained of God, do not seem to have any duty in the matter. What *would* be their scriptural duty towards a spiritual church, is beyond their reach of performance, because no such church is to be found. But if there be such a church ; then, civil rulers professing to receive the Bible as a revelation from God, do not seem to have any choice. It is obvious, therefore, that preliminary to any satisfactory discussion concerning our connexion with the state, it is necessary to examine our accordance with the Bible.

To overleap this branch of inquiry, is to leave an open door for pretension to every society, however constituted, which chooses to call itself a Christian church, and put in its claim. If the legitimacy of all such claims be admitted, then, the civil ruler must either receive all equally, or reject all equally ; or, by receiving some and rejecting others, raise against himself an outcry of partiality and injustice. The rival claims can never be adjusted at the bar of

the state. They must be adjusted at the bar of the Scripture. We say, let the state prefer, and establish by all means, whatever is found scriptural, because it is scriptural; and let those who doubt about our respective systems, rigidly examine them in the light of Scripture. Our opponents say, no; let the state prefer nothing, and establish nothing; away with all invidious distinctions; that is, as we interpret it, let them make no difference between scriptural and unscriptural, true and false, the appointment of God and the invention of men. For those who hold such sentiments as these, it may be consistent enough to feel impatient of a scriptural investigation, and to rush at once into general discussions and plausibly indignant appeals upon equal rights and unjust preferences. But we cannot do so, because we feel that if there be any church constitution which God has called right, it is not *equally* right with others, but pre-eminently right above all others: so that to prefer it is not injustice, but not to prefer it is infidelity.

Under this conviction I have already entered into an examination of our ecclesiastical system, and pointed out in some particulars its happy accordance with the word of God. Our object is to commend for cordial adoption, and prompt and vigorous extension, what we conceive to be correct, rather than expose or condemn what we deem erroneous. If, therefore, I refer to the position and practices of dissent, (whether of Roman or British growth,) it is not from any feelings of personal unkindness, or

any views of factious partisanship, but simply for the sake of contrast, and to exhibit more clearly what seems to me, our own central and scriptural position.

I now resume the consideration of the church visible, or baptized society, specially with reference to its appointed executive—the christian ministry.

This important subject naturally divides itself into four branches.

1. The mode of appointment to the christian ministry.
2. The succession of persons so appointed.
3. The nature of the commission originally given to the apostles; and,
4. The nature of the commission derived to their successors in the ministry of the church.

1. First. In the mode of appointment, there was a difference between the apostles themselves and their immediate successors. Concerning the apostles, we read that the Lord Jesus Christ went up into a mountain, and called unto him whom he would, and they came to him. And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and cast out devils.¹

To these he said, “ Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.²

¹ St. Mark iii. 13—15.

² St. John xv. 16.

And, again, he said to them, “ Peace be unto you ; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost : whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.”³ He said also unto them, “ Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven ; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.”⁴ And, finally, he said to them, “ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.”⁵

The only outward act recorded as accompanying this original appointment is, that *he breathed on them*, when he said, “ Receive ye the Holy Ghost : ” intimating, that the gift of the Spirit to the church is derived from his risen human nature, the conqueror of death and hell, and the restorer of man to fellowship with God.⁶ We nowhere read of any directions given by him to the apostles, with regard to the mode of appointing their successors. He promised them generally, that the Holy Spirit should guide them into all truth, and during forty

³ St. John xx. 21—23.

⁴ St. Matt. xviii. 18.

⁵ St. Matt. xxviii. 18—20.

⁶ Comp. Acts ii. 32, 33.

days after his resurrection he conversed with them, from time to time, “speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” With such instructions, and under the immediate guidance of the Holy Ghost, they adopted a mode of appointment for their successors, and *commanded its continuance*: They did not leave their successors, as their Lord left them, without any written or recorded directions upon this point: intimating thereby, that their successors would not possess the same infallible inspiration in the Spirit which they possessed; and would therefore require more precise and specific instructions in writing than they required.

The outward and visible part of the mode adopted by them, and enjoined upon their successors, was not *breathing* on the candidate for the ministry—this is peculiar to their own appointment by the Lord, himself the head of influences, both grace and gifts; but their mode confessed their dependence while it assumed their commission—it was *prayer, with the laying on of hands*. By the prayer they acknowledged that the spiritual blessing was not theirs to give, but their Lord’s: and by the laying on of hands, they proclaimed that the outward office was theirs to designate and perpetuate among men.

The first instance of the practice on record, is the case of the deacons mentioned in the sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Here it is important to distinguish between the selection of the persons to be appointed, and the appointment of the persons

selected. It belonged to the lay members of the church to select, but not to appoint. The apostles said to the people, “*Look ye out* men, whom *we* may *appoint*.” They did so; the men thus selected had the approbation of the people, but they were not thereby made ministers of the church. The next step was to set them before the apostles, “and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.”

It is important to remark, that this selection by the people was made with reference to the *character* of the individual, as suitable for the ministry generally, and not with reference to themselves personally or locally as the flock over whom that individual was to be placed. If judged fit for the ministry at all, he was thereby pronounced fit for any locality in the wide world, where it might please God, in his providence, to place him. He was not appropriated by any particular flock, as having gifts acceptable to *them*, but he was given into the hands, and placed at the disposal of the church, as an instrument and witness for the Lord. And accordingly we find Philip, who was commended for ordination by the lay members of the church of Jerusalem, proceeding immediately to preach the Gospel, not to them, but to the people of Samaria.

In the case of Timothy, the selection of the individual was made in compliance with certain prophecies which had been uttered concerning him. Being so selected, he received his appointment from St. Paul, acting in concert with other ministers.

To this the apostle refers, saying, “ Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the *laying on of the hands* of the presbytery.” And in his instructions to Timothy concerning subsequent appointments, he says, “ *Lay hands suddenly on no man.*” In the cases of Titus, and of the “ elders ordained in every church,” (Acts xiv. 23,) we have no distinct information concerning the *selection* of the individuals: but, in every case, the authoritative *appointment* to the office was conveyed by the laying on of the hands of some who had been already appointed to the same office themselves. And the commandment to continue this method is plain: “ For this cause left I thee in Crete,” is the language of St. Paul to Titus, “ that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee.”⁷

So much for the mode of appointment to the ministry of the church, a mode which we have no authority for saying was in any instance dispensed with or altered. There is no scriptural ground for believing that any persons, not so appointed, were recognised by the church, as authorised and qualified ministers, but just the reverse. Dissenters in this country differ among themselves (their ministers differ) as to the necessity of any formal ordination. Nor is this to be wondered at; seeing that their theological students are encouraged to public preaching and public prayer, antecedent to ordination. This makes ordination a mere form, it is

⁷ Tit. i. 5.

true, nevertheless it is defended by some as agreeable to the scriptures I have just quoted, and it is acquiesced in by others, for the sake of uniformity. We treat it differently. We hold the distinction between ministers and people to be plain ; plain in symbols as well as language ; as plain as the difference between *stars* and *candlesticks*.⁸ “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.”⁹ We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour *among you, and are OVER YOU IN THE LORD, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake.*¹

Nothing can be more obvious, than that such instructions were given by the apostle to the christian laity, concerning the first pastors or angels of the churches. And we have already seen how those pastors were appointed.

In answer to this, and for the purpose of disproving the importance of ordination, considered as an outward ceremony designating to an office; dissenters say, first, that the pastors here spoken of by the apostle were all men of personal piety, and preachers of scriptural truth : and secondly, that obedience to them is enjoined in virtue of their *character* altogether, and not at all in virtue of their office. Thus, restraining the precept to such pastors as they are pleased to consider faithful men, and

⁸ Rev i. 20.

⁹ Heb. xiii. 17.

¹ 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

to them, only as long as they continue to give satisfaction to their judges ; they get wholly rid of the constraint of the divine injunction, which, by this interpretation and this limitation, they render nugatory ; and thereupon find their conscience perfectly at ease, while they make free, in word and deed, with bishops, and churches, and ordinances.

It is highly probable that most, if not all, of the first pastors of the churches, were men of personal godliness, and preachers of sound doctrine ; but it does by no means follow that their character was their qualification as pastors. Nay, the very existence of pastors as distinct from their flocks, proves the contrary : or else, it proves that in each church there was but one godly man, possessing the gift of speech. For if all, or most, of the members of a church were of that character ; and if character, without ordination, qualified for the ministry, then all, or most, were ministers, and the distinction disappears. But we have already seen that the distinction is scriptural, and therefore this interpretation must disappear.

It is not my design, or desire, to deprecate character, or to justify the wicked : far otherwise, but personal character is not my present subject. I am proving the reality and the authority of the pastoral office I deny not, that this office has been too often entrusted to unfit hands, and abused to the worst of purposes. It has been in such sort abused, as to be made the instrument of lust and ambition, of avarice and injustice and sloth. But still, the

office exists, and, in those deplorable cases, weighs down the wretched renegade who holds it, under its increased responsibilities, and aggravated judgments. It will be objected that this is to ascribe an *opus operatum* to a mere manual ceremony. But let us not be deterred by hard words. If the *opus* referred to, be an increased responsibility, then truly there is an *opus operatum* in the reception of every christian privilege, and of this among the rest. The privilege of instruction in our Lord's will, incurs the penalty of *many stripes*, if that will be not obeyed. The privilege of christian ordinances transfers a community from the more tolerable condition of Tyre and Sidon, into the more intolerable responsibility of Chorazin and Bethsaida. And the privilege of the christian ministry exposes the unworthy intruder to a deadlier condemnation. This is not merely gathered by general inference, but seems to be the direct and obvious meaning of St. James, where he says, in his catholic epistle to the twelve tribes, *My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.*

2. The next point for consideration will not require many words. It is *the succession of persons* so separated to the christian ministry.

It is as plain and undeniable a fact, as any on the pages of history, that in each succeeding generation of mankind since the days of the apostles, there have been officiating ministers in the church visible here on earth. Testimonies of this may be

collected from writers in every age. It would be as easy as it would be endless to multiply quotations. Let the English reader take up any history, ecclesiastical or civil, Milner, Mosheim, Gibbon, Hallam, and he will find in every age of the declining Roman empire, plain historical mention made of the christian church with her bishops and pastors, naturally and necessarily constituting parts of the narrative ; as truly so, as emperors and generals, and armies and battles. Where is the evidence then, we ask, of those bishops and pastors having been appointed at any time, or in any age, in a way different from their appointment in the first age ? namely, by the laying on of the hands of those who preceded them. The fact that they have existed in every age, is as undeniable as that men have existed. There may have been irregularities or failures in some special instances : but these do not interfere with the general and regular succession ; any more than the fact of many individuals having died childless, interferes with the succession of mankind. That any essential change took place in the manner of the appointment of christian ministers, we deny ; and the *onus probandi* is fairly thrown upon those who assert such a change. They can point out without difficulty, historical evidence of the various modes of appointing temporal rulers, kings, consuls, dictators, emperors. They can adduce proofs, fearfully conclusive, of the disgraceful cabals attending the promotion of certain ministers of the christian church to stations of authority and

dignity, and emolument, especially to the see of Rome : but they can point out no evidence, they can adduce no proof, of any variation in the mode of transferring a layman from his common condition as a layman, into the peculiar condition of a christian minister.

But while we deny that any essential change took place, in any age, in the manner of the appointment, and the regular succession of the ministers of the church ; we do not deny, nay, we are forward to maintain, that a very grievous change took place in their manner of living and in the matter of their preaching. Some became mere worldlings, or worse, in their habits and conversation ; others advanced divers heresies, making the sublime mysteries of revelation to bend before the speculations of philosophy falsely so called, and so rejecting or at least adulterating all the grand distinguishing peculiarities of the glorious gospel of the grace of God.

At first the instances of degeneracy were few compared with the faithful and orthodox. But the proportions rapidly changed, until the faithful and orthodox became a minority. Corruptions overspread the face of the church. The bishops and pastors taught the traditions of men, instead of the pure truth of God, and the baptized people throughout Christendom, England included, were content to have it so.

We are thus compelled to perceive that the subject involves another question, quite distinct from

the mere matter of *succession*. This is of serious consequence, particularly as some modern discussions of this question are limited to the two points of a commission given, and a succession instituted. The subject is thus stated :

“The argument here will consist of two parts. First, it must be shown that those passages in which the apostles are invested by the Saviour with the governing power in his church, are addressed to them not simply as individuals, but also as heads of a succession ; and secondly, it will be necessary to point out within the limits of the apostolical writings, certain instances of persons thus deriving that governing power from those to whom it had been first committed.”

I complain of this as an inadequate division, because after both of these parts have been discussed, there remains untouched the important inquiry, what was the *nature* of the commission itself? what is intended by this *governing power*? And further still, after the nature of the commission given to the apostles themselves shall have been ascertained ; it remains to inquire whether the whole of it without exception, or only a part of it, and if a part only, what part, was transmitted to their successors.

The commission given to the apostles themselves, and acted upon by them in several notable instances, included the *working of miracles*; as healing the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead. The transmission of this is not pretended, and therefore discrimination in the matter is im-

perative, seeing that at the outset we meet with this undeniable abatement of an *apostolical* succession.

But although the power of physical miracles is not claimed by any sane advocates of an apostolical succession, *the power of the keys*, as it has been called, is. We proceed, therefore, to ascertain, if possible, the nature of this part of the commission.

Previous, however, to so doing, it belongs to my present purpose, with reference to those scriptural particulars already mentioned, to invite a scrutiny of our church system. No man is recognised or received as a qualified minister in our church who has not been presented to a bishop, and solemnly set apart for the office by prayer and the laying on of the hands of the bishop and assisting presbyters. This is in strict accordance with the scriptural pattern: and in order that, in compliance with apostolical precept, it may not be done suddenly or unadvisedly for any man, it is done after testimonials of the highest attainable respectability have been required as to character; and after careful examination as to literary and theological attainments.

It is no sound argument against our church to say that some bishops, either from the indulgence of personal prejudices, or in the exercise of private or interested partialities, or from any other cause, admit improper persons to holy orders. If this be done, it is done in defiance of, and not in accordance with, the constitution of the church: and it

is our scriptural constitution, not any unscriptural practices of individuals, that we defend. Nothing can be more uncandid than to support the appearance of an argument against a system, by dilating on abuses committed by individuals (whatever may be their station) in defiance of the system itself to which they belong. If the fundamental and authoritative enactments of the system, by which every member is bound, can be shown to be unscriptural, the case is different: but there may be, as there is, good and sufficient cause to protest against the abuse, without any approach to a scriptural cause for seceding from the system. The attention of our opponents is invited to this, and to a candid consideration of whether the lavish and reiterated use made by them of our real and supposed abuses, (as if they were arguments against our church system,) do not supply internal evidence of the fact, that sound arguments against our fundamental principles are not so easily found. The blame, however, in such cases does not rest solely with the bishop. For, in accordance with another feature of our scriptural pattern, no man is presented to a bishop for ordination in our church, without having the approbation of those lay-members of the church who have had the best opportunities of judging of his character. Three times the congregation among whom he has been accustomed to worship, are publicly appealed to, that if any of them know cause why he should not be admitted to the sacred office, they do declare it. And, finally, the bishop,

before he commences the ordination service, thus addresses the congregation assembled. “ Brethren, if there be any of you who knoweth any impediments, or notable crime, in any of these persons presented to be ordained deacons, for the which he ought not to be admitted to that office, let him come forth in the name of God, and show what the crime or impediment is.”

Having allowed him to pass such an ordeal as this, how can they afterwards, with any show of consistency, complain against the bishop for ordaining him ? ²

3. We now advance to our third general head—the nature of the commission given to the apostles themselves. “ Whosoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven: and whosoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matt. xvi. 19.) “ Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” (John xx. 23.)

The voluminous interpretations which have been

² The manner in which the *Si quis* is commonly read by the minister and neglected by the congregation, cries loudly for reform. It is a most serious and responsible portion of the duty of both. Our people generally do not understand the nature of the appeal made to them on such occasions. It should be explained by the minister, and the *Si quis* read so as to commend itself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

The signing of testimonials also should be looked upon as too grave a matter to be done of mere courtesy or good fellowship. It is an act inferior in importance only to ordination itself.

advanced, of this commission, may be substantially stated under two general heads.

By one class of interpreters the words are understood as applying to the *persons* of men, and conferring upon the apostles judicial powers to pardon or condemn. By another class of interpreters, the words are understood as applying to the *characters* of men in the light of God's revealed truth; and conferring upon the apostles infallible inspiration to declare what descriptions of men are pardoned, and what descriptions of men are condemned.

(1.) Taken in the first sense, they invest the apostles with absolute authority to loose or bind, to pardon or not to pardon, their fellow creatures, just as they pleased. There is no mention of the state of mind of the person, no allusion to his faith, or his penitence, or his character, or his sufferings. There is no restriction whatever. The whole power is left unconditionally to the option of the apostles. As if Jesus had said to them—Go ye into the world among men. Be ye judges for eternity between man and man. Whom you will pardon, and whom you will condemn. It is all left to you. Whatsoever man *ye shall bind*:—ye are the judges, there is no higher tribunal on earth, you have no superior to consult, no qualification in the individual to require, no fault to wait for; your own sovereign pleasure is exalted by this commission from me into the place of God; whatsoever man *ye shall bind with a curse on earth*, that man is bound with a curse by the God of heaven: and whatsoever man

YE shall loose or pardon upon earth, that man is, *ipso facto*, pardoned by the God of heaven. Go forth then as God : salvation and damnation are in your hands : whose soever sins YE remit, *they are remitted*. Your word is as the fiat of the Almighty. You speak, and it is done. You command, and it stands fast. Whose soever sins YE retain, they are retained.

This is no caricature. The authority claimed by the Bishop of Rome under this commission, supposed to be derived to him from St. Peter, is expressed in language extending not only to such judicial treatment of individuals, but also to similar treatment of states and nations. It has become the fashion with many, to despise as obsolete the Roman constitutions and canons ecclesiastical which claim for the successor of St. Peter, and those in authority under him, power from the Lord Jesus Christ, to bind and loose in a most majestic manner, all nations and all kingdoms, to pluck up, destroy, dissipate, ruinate, plant, and build, according to his sovereign pleasure.

On this point I shall at present merely say, that none of these constitutions have ever been rescinded by competent authority, and that as touching the privilege of power to bind and loose, as well as every other privilege, (whatever untoward hindrances may for a season be in the way of its exercise, owing to the success of heresy,) still *nullum tempus ecclesiae occurrit*.

There is, however, in our times, and among our-

selves, an apparently modified demand for ministerial authority grounded on this commission, yet so urged as fully to justify the description I have given of what it amounts to. After citing the passages from Scripture, already quoted, the writer proceeds, “Here our Lord gives, or, rather, promises to give, first to St. Peter, and then to all the apostles, what is called the power of the keys, and assures them that whatever they shall bind or loose on earth, shall also be bound or loosed in heaven. This promise was fulfilled after his resurrection; when he said to them, as is recorded in the 20th of St. John, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.’ *That is, they were to have the power of doing, or forbearing to do, some act, in virtue of which sin might be forgiven or remain unforgiven.*” Our Lord’s language is, Whose soever sins ye remit—without reference to any intervening or instrumental act; but the interpretation now before us introduces this intermediate step; which, after all, is a modification more in sound than in meaning. For if the minister has power to do, or forbear to do, an act, (the act of baptizing, for instance,) in virtue of which sin is forgiven, or remains unforgiven; then, however the obnoxious pretension may be glossed in words, it in fact amounts to placing forgiveness, and non-forgiveness, at the absolute disposal of the man; and thereby of making all around him who believe it, his slaves, abject in proportion to their conscientious sincerity. To such

results must this view of the apostolical commission, and its continuance in the church, ever lead.

(2.) The other view of that commission is, that in it our Lord Jesus Christ gave to the apostles power and authority to *state his truth so infallibly*, that their statements, in their application to every man upon earth, would be found in accordance with the decisions of the God of heaven. As if Jesus had said to them, Go forth among men. Teach my truth. You are in possession of the mind of God with regard to the salvation of men. When you declare on earth what descriptions of character are pardoned, God declares the same in heaven. When you declare on earth what descriptions of persons are condemned, God declares the same in heaven. You bind penitent faith and remission together, impenitent unbelief and non-remission : so does God. Whose soever sins YE remit, in such statements, *they are remitted*. You speak as God. It is in truth not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost that speaketh by you. And whosesoever sins YE retain, in such statements, *they are retained*. Moreover, you shall enlarge in your characteristic statements of penitence and impenitence, faith and unbelief; and in all that you shall thus say, you shall speak with unerring exactness. Every sentence you utter upon earth, shall be ratified eternally in heaven.

These are the two views. The words refer either to the absolute treatment of individuals, or to the infallible statement of truth : either to the application of pardon or no pardon to *persons* ; or

to the declaration of pardon or no pardon to *characters*.

Which of these, then, is the true meaning of the commission? It will scarcely be denied that a most legitimate mode of trying this question, is to trace, as far as we can, the steps of the apostolical history, and ascertain, with as much accuracy as possible, on which of these views the apostles themselves appear to have acted.

Our appeal, then, is to their own words as recorded in the Acts and Epistles.

(1.) When the apostles Peter and John were brought before the Jewish council in consequence of the commotion occasioned in Jerusalem by their proceedings, they said, “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” (Acts v. 30—32.)

Here forgiveness is described as a gift from the risen Saviour, not from the delegated apostle; and the apostles are described as *witnesses*; and the gift of the Holy Ghost is limited to *character*, even to *them that obey* God.

(2.) In the house of Cornelius, whither Peter was sent, to make special use of *the keys* in opening the kingdom of heaven to the Gentiles, he thus concluded his sermon:—“Him God raised up the third

day, and shewed him openly ; not to all the people, but unto witnesses, chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead. To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” (Acts x. 40—43.) Here is an apostle’s own account of what the Lord commanded him to do—to preach and to testify, not to forgive sins ; no, but to declare infallibly as the prophets, by the same Holy Spirit, had declared before, that *whosoever believeth* shall receive remission of sins : thus binding faith and forgiveness on earth, as God has bound them in heaven.

(3.) When Paul was allowed an opportunity of preaching in the Jewish synagogue at Antioch, in Pisidia, he thus applied his noble testimony for the Lord Jesus. “ Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” (Acts xiii. 38, 39.) Through this man is preached, not by us is conferred, the forgiveness of sins. No, their office was to *declare*. To the Lord alone they ascribe the power, the undelegated power, to *confer*. And further, they declare on earth according to his mind in heaven, that the blessing is conferred by him *on all those, and those only, who believe*.

(4.) When St. Paul was appealed to by the ter-

rified and trembling jailor at Philippi, crying, What shall I do to be saved ? he said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* If the apostle had possessed a delegated power to forgive sins, here was a golden glorious opportunity for its exercise. If he had looked upon the sacrament of baptism, which he was commissioned to administer, as conveying *ipso facto* the forgiveness of sins ; here was an unexceptionable occasion for announcing it, to the consolation of his trembling disciple. But there is not the slightest intimation of any such thing. The apostle performed his office, binding salvation and faith, and administering baptism ; and seems to have been wholly unconscious of possessing any further power in the matter. If his commission had been judicial, and its application personal, his conduct on this occasion would have betrayed a grievous want of feeling for the unhappy jailor, as well as a gross dereliction of duty in trading with the talents entrusted to him by the Lord : but if his commission were declaratory, and its application characteristic, then his conduct was strictly in keeping with it. This goes far to prove the apostle's own estimate of the commission under which he acted, except on those peculiar occasions when he found the Holy Ghost moving him to the performance of visible miracles.

In strict accordance with this view of the case, he writes to the Corinthians, “ Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man ? I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God

gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase.” (1 Cor. iii. 5—7.) And St. John writes, “ That which we have seen and heard, *declare we* unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us : and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things *write we* unto you, that your joy may be full. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and *declare* unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth.” (1 John i. 3—6.)

With this evidence before us, from the only document really available in the case, it is difficult to admit that the apostles were invested with an absolute power of forgiving whom they would, a “power,” as is asserted, of doing, or forbearing to do, some act, in virtue of which sin might be forgiven, or remain unforgiven.” Neither their conduct nor their language conveys the slightest intimation of the personal consciousness of such tremendous power. It is indeed a power, the exercise of which, even by God himself, is involved in a mysteriousness for the present inscrutable ; because, to unaided human reason, it seems incontrovertible that he who has power to forgive whom he will, wilfully condemns all who are not forgiven. “ O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !” (Rom. xi. 33.)

It well becomes every created intellect so to bow before the infinite God ; but to assert that such power is delegated to man, is to degrade the mystery into a blasphemy.

We conclude, therefore, that the second view of the commission, as stated above, is the correct one ;³

³ “‘ And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.’ That is, thou shalt first open the door of faith to the Gentiles. He had said he would build his church to endure for ever, against which ‘the gates of hell should not prevail,’ which had prevailed against the Jewish church : and to thee, O Peter, (saith he,) I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that thou mayest open a door for the bringing in the gospel to that church which was accomplished in Acts x. And I make no doubt that those words of Peter respect these words of Christ. (Acts xv. 7.) And he giveth him power of ‘binding and loosing ;’ and this power the other disciples had in common with him.

“‘ Binding and loosing,’ in the language and style most familiarly known to the Jewish nation, (and it can little be doubted that Christ speaketh according to the common and most familiar sense of the language,) did refer more properly to things than to persons ; therefore he saith O ἐσυ δῆσης, and not ὁν and in Matt. xviii. 18 Οσα αν δρσητε, not σονες.

“ The phrase to bind and to loose, in their vulgar speech, meant to prohibit and to permit ; or to teach what is prohibited or permitted, what lawful or unlawful ; as may appear by these instances ; a few produced, whereas *thousands* might be alleged out of their writings.

“ Our wise men say that in Judah they did work on the Passover eve till noon, but in Galilee not at all, and as for the night, the school of Shammai *bound* it, that is, forbade to work in it, or taught that it was unlawful ; but the school of Hillel *loosed* it till sunrising, or taught that it was lawful to work till sunrise.

“ R. Jochanan went from Tsipporis' to Tiberias ; he saith,

that the “ power of the keys” was declaratory, and its application characteristic; and that in virtue of

‘ Why brought ye to me this elder? for what I loose he binds, and what I bind he looseth.’

“ ‘ The Scribes have bound leaven,’ that is, they have prohibited it. They have upon necessity loosed salutation on the Sabbath, i. e. they have permitted it, or taught that it was lawful.

“ Nachum asked R. Jochanan concerning a certain matter, to whom he replied, ‘ Thou shalt neither bind nor loose.’

“ R. Chaiia said, ‘ Whatsoever I have bound to you elsewhere, I will loose to you here.’ ‘ The mouth that bindeth is the mouth that looseth,’ &c. Thousands of instances of this nature might be produced, by all which it is clear that the Jews’ use of the phrase was of their doctors or learned men’s *teaching* what was lawful and permitted, and what was unlawful and prohibited. Hence is that definition of such men’s office and work; ‘ A wise man, that judgeth judgment maketh unclean and maketh clean,—bindeth and looseth;’ that is, teacheth what is clean and unclean, what is permitted and prohibited. And Maimonides, giving the relation of their ordaining of elders, and to what several employments they were ordained, saith thus,—‘ A wise man that is fit to teach all the law, the consistory had power to ordain him, to judge, but not to teach, bound, and loose; or power to teach bound and loose, but not a judge in pecuniary matters; or power to both these, but not to judge in matters of mulct, &c. So that the ordination of one to that function which was more properly ministerial, or to teach the people their duty,—as what was lawful, what not; what they were to do, what not to do, was to such a purpose, or in such a tenor as this, ‘ Take thou power to bind and loose, or to teach what is bound and loose,’ for they use both expressions.

“ By this vulgar and only sense of this phrase in the nation, the meaning of Christ using it there to his disciples is easily understood; namely, that he first doth instate them in a minis-

it the apostles were invested with infallibility in stating upon earth the truth of the God of heaven.

4. We now inquire, fourthly, was this commission, thus understood, derived without abatement to their successors? And in answer to this inquiry, I call attention to the language of St. Paul to Timothy, contrasted with the language of Christ to the apostles. Christ said, “Take no thought how or what ye shall speak : for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” (St. Matt. x. 19, 20.) Also, (St. Luke xxi. 14. 15,) “Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer : For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.”

St. Paul said to his immediate successor, “Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, terial capacity to teach, what bound and loose, what to be done and what not ; and this as ministers : and thus all ministers successively to the end of the world. But as they were apostles of that singular and unparalleled order, as the like never were in the church again, he gave them power to bind and loose in a degree above all ministers that were to follow ; namely, that whereas some part of Moses’ law was to stand in practice, and some to be laid aside ; some things under the law prohibited, were now to be permitted, and some things then permitted, to be now prohibited,—he promises the apostles such assistance of his Spirit, and giveth them such power, that what they allowed to stand in practice should stand,—and what to fall, should fall: ‘what they bound in earth should be bound in heaven,’ &c.—*Lightfoot*, vol. iii. 98.

to doctrine. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.” (1 Tim. iv. 13, 15, 16.)

The distinction is sufficiently striking. The apostolical commission excluded all risk of error, by putting in abeyance the intellect of fallible man, while he spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. The transmitted commission recognises the risk, inviting fallible man to meditate and take heed to his doctrine. It implies also a standard by which to regulate and rectify his meditations.

To be diligent in stating the same truth, and in charging every teacher within their reach to take heed and state *no other doctrine*, is the burden of the apostle’s exhortation to his successors: “As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do.” (1 Tim. i. 3, 4.) “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.” (1 Tim. iv. 6.) “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, and who shall be able to teach others also.” (2 Tim.

ii. 2.) “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom ; preach the word ; be instant in season, out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” (2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.) “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee ; if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of riot, or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God ; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre ; but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate ; holding fast *the faithful word* as he hath been *taught*, that he may be able by *sound doctrine* both to exhort and convince the gainsayers.” (Titus i. 5—9.)

If Timothy and Titus declared the truth of God as correctly as Paul and Peter ; then it might be said with equal truth to Timothy and Titus as to Paul and Peter, Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained—whatsoever ye bind on earth, is bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye loose on earth, is loosed in heaven. They declared and pronounced to God’s people, God’s believing people, being penitent, the forgiveness of sins unto salvation : and they declared and pronounced, that he that believeth not, shall be damned.

In this sense alone, it appears to me, and under this limitation, could this branch of the aposto-

lical commission be transmitted. And in this sense alone does the church seem to be justified in the use of her Lord's awful words in her services for ordination. Such use, so understood, is in character with all her services. They are constructed for true christian believers, and the prayers offered in them are treated as prayers of faith, that is, prayers *answered*. According to that saying of the Lord—"Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Prayer for the Holy Ghost upon the candidate for the priesthood, to *replenish him with the truth of God's doctrine*, being offered in faith and answered; he is addressed as under that divine guidance and teaching which will cause his word of doctrine to be conformable to the mind of God as stated by the apostles, and therefore binding and loosing upon earth, as it is bound and loosed in heaven.

That it is in this sense, and understood according to this *declaratory* interpretation, the words are used by our own church, a candid comparison of her offices does, I think, make abundantly clear. Our forms of absolution are three in number.

(1.) The first in our daily service distinctly defines the "power and commandment" which God has given to the ministers of his church. It is to *declare and pronounce* to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins. The prerogative of *conferring* what the minister thus declares, belongs to God alone. "HE pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel." Here every-

thing is in its scriptural place. The donor of the blessing is God. The receiver of the blessing is the penitent believer. The messenger authorised to declare and pronounce the consolatory fact, is the minister. The declaration itself is a transcript of the language which apostles spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost ; and therefore, in making this declaration, every minister of the church is actually, and apostolically, binding on earth what is bound in heaven, and loosing on earth what is loosed in heaven.

(2.) The form of absolution in our Communion Service implies, without directly asserting, the ministerial office. It declares, that Almighty God has promised forgiveness of sins to certain characters, namely, to “ all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him ;” and then uses this animating and encouraging truth as the basis of a prayer, that He may be pleased to do as he has said.

(3.) The form in the Visitation of the Sick is more pointed, because it becomes more personal.

The minister is no longer dealing in general declarations, to be appropriated, or not, according to the various characters of those who hear him. All that belongs to *character* has been already investigated, as far as man can investigate the mind and heart of his fellow man. The faith and penitence of the sick man have been inquired into, and found satisfactory. If not so found, the subsequent declaration is not to be made. If so found, this na-

turally divests the subsequent declaration of the minister, of all that was hypothetical in it when made in the congregation. *There* he invited to self-examination, by describing the true and indispensable christian character. *Here* that part of the transaction is already finished in his personal addresses to the individual and the answers returned. Here, therefore, the minister has two things ready—God's truth as the donor of forgiveness, and man's prescribed character to be the receiver of forgiveness—all that remains is the exercise of his own office, as the authorised messenger from God to such a man. So situated he says, “Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him ; of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences.” Now in what sense is *absolve* here used ? Not certainly to convey the idea of bestowing or conferring pardon ; *that* is conveyed by the word *forgive*, and the passage contains a prayer that the Lord may forgive the offender. Absolve, then, is here distinguished clearly from forgive. The Lord has left power to his church to absolve, but he is implored himself to forgive. The office of the Lord is to forgive. The office of the penitent believer is to receive forgiveness. The office of the messenger is, as we have seen, to declare and pronounce forgiveness. Can anything be more certain, then, that in this place *absolve* is used to convey the idea of declaring and pronouncing (not of bestowing) forgiveness ? And that when the minister proceeds

to say, "And by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins," the intended meaning is not I forgive, but I declare and pronounce to you, I God's messenger entrusted with this truth, declare and pronounce to you A. B., a penitent believer, the forgiveness of all your sins?

Still, as the meaning of the word is equivocal, being used here as synonymous with declaring and pronouncing, and being used in the first of our forms as synonymous with the thing declared and pronounced, I cannot withhold my honest conviction that the expression *I absolve thee*, although thus defensible by a friendly interpreter, is an unwise oversight in the purifiers of the Book of Prayer, inconsistent with our other services, and needlessly prejudicial in wounding the consciences of weak brethren, and multiplying disaffection, in various degrees, against our church.

Should such a statement occasion pain to any mind, I would respectfully inquire, have any of her best and devoted sons ever claimed absolute infallibility of arrangement for our church? Surely not. Short of such an arrangement, then, there is a possibility of error. Nay, in not claiming such an arrangement, there is a general acknowledgment of error somewhere. Why, then, shrink from an honest avowal of what we believe to be the particular instance? O no. Let that system, around whose neck is suspended the fatal millstone of arrogated infallibility, reject all acknowledgment of error; let the papal personification of pride and self-com-

placency say, I am perfect ; but let our language (collectively as churchmen, as well as individually as creatures) be, "Who can tell how oft he offendeth ? Cleanse thou me from secret faults ; keep thy servants, also, from presumptuous sins ;" especially the presumptuous sin of factiously defending what we cannot conscientiously approve !

Returning upon our scriptural inquiry, we are invited to consider the practical consequences of the cessation of inspired or infallible teachers in the church.

Upon the supposition (painful but imperative) that the successors of Timothy and Titus did not continue to state the truth of God with exact precision, it is evident that, in proportion as their statements became incorrect, their declarations concerning sin and sinners could not be depended upon, and the use of the Lord's solemn words at their ordination would become more and more glaringly condemnatory of their departure from the truth. That such a departure from the infallible precision of apostolical doctrine did take place, is too palpable to need proof. But observe, (and let it be with devout acknowledgement of the divine goodness,) in the mean time, the canon of scripture, containing an infallible and sufficient standard, was completed. Thus the church was supplied with a twofold blessing ; first, in the Scriptures, a fixed and infallible standard of truth ; and, secondly, in the ministry, in succession from the apostles, a living voice to be heard and received as an ordinance of God, but always subject to a rectifying appeal to the Scriptures.

The city of God was supplied with a number of watches, all set a-going and set right, but not absolutely and infallibly secured against going wrong. Had this been all, the consequences had been dangerous in the extreme. The watches might go wrong, and so gradually, so universally, so imperceptibly, as to attract no special observation till day was turned into night. But this was not all. Before the watches had time to go seriously wrong, a sundial was set up, giving unalterably the true time, and, of course, supplying a rectifying standard, to which to compare, and by which to reset, the fallible watches. The dial alone, without the watches, would have been inconvenient, multitudes not knowing how to consult it; and the watches alone, without the dial, would have been dangerous and delusive, for the reasons already assigned. But, in the combination of both, the church has all the convenient readiness of the watch, together with all the satisfying certainty of the dial.

It is easy and natural to suppose (what in fact took place) that the degree of deference paid to these two things would vary very much in different places and times. Some would submit more implicitly to the word of the ministers, others would have recourse more rigidly to the written standard. Under such circumstances, what would the ministers themselves do? Those among them who loved God, and his glory, and his truth, more than their own personal aggrandisement, would teach the people, indeed, with all authority, and administer all the

ordinances commanded by Christ, with conscientious faithfulness ; but they would, at the same time, encourage and exhort the people to appeal carefully and wisely to the standard, as the Bereans did, to ascertain for themselves *whether these things be so*. On the contrary, corrupt and carnal ministers would avail themselves of their office to arrogate authority, and take advantage of the ignorance and worldly occupations of the people to induce them to take their religion on hearsay, and trust the watch of the priest without any reference to the dial of the Lord. This unchristian ambition in the priesthood, aided by the difficulty, then existing, of multiplying copies of the Scriptures, gave an open door for the growing abuses by which the page of ecclesiastical history is so broadly and indelibly stained. The sundial was shut up within the walls of a convent. The watches went wrong. There was no regulating standard by which to reset them. They went more wrong, and still more, notwithstanding the faint remonstrances of some, which gradually became more faint, until the hands pointed to pictures instead of realities ; to an image of the cross, fitted to affect the senses, instead of the doctrine of the cross, fitted to sanctify the soul ; to the natural tenderness of the blessed Virgin, instead of the sympathy of Jesus, touched with a feeling of our infirmities ; to water, and oil, and purgatorial fires, instead of the atoning blood of the Lamb of God ; to tradition, the very thing that had gone wrong, instead of Scripture, the only thing to set all right.

Darkness came upon the church, gross darkness. The glorious achievement of the Reformation was to break down the convent walls, and bring out the old infallible sundial to the view of Europe.

There was nothing in all this, but what had been distinctly predicted in the holy Scriptures. Christ and his apostles had uttered both prophecies of evil and promises of good concerning the church : prophecies of false teachers, disputes, disorders, revolts, corruptions, most ruinous and destructive ; and at the same time promises of sure and certain preservation to the end.

St. Paul had sounded the solemn warning,—“ I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts xx. 29, 30.)

Of the disciples so drawn away, he had given several distressing descriptions. “ Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils ; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron ; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” (1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3.) “ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient

to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God ; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof ; from such turn away.”

(2 Tim. iii. 1—5.) “ For the time will come, when they will not endure sound doctrine ; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears ; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

(2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.) He had predicted, also, the great “ falling away,” and the reign of the “ man of sin.”

“ Let no man deceive you by any means : for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition : who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped ; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things ? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work : only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.” (2 Thess. ii. 3—7.) St. Peter also had plainly predicted a very grievous state of things in the church. “ But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that

bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways ; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they, with feigned words, make merchandise of you : whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not." (2 Pet. ii. 1—3.)

These and such passages in the writings of the apostles contained a very fearful comment upon the predictions of Christ himself. " Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth ? I tell you, nay ; but rather division. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father ; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother ; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law." (Luke xii 52, 53.) " For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom : and there shall be famine, and pestilence, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you : and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

(Matt. xxiv. 7—12.) I refrain from adding to these the more detailed predictions of idolatry and blasphemy, contained in the visions given to St. John in Patmos, and left for the instruction of the church.

Had the church continued one united, holy, catholic, harmonious, powerful, and prosperous body, under faithful and true teachers, these prophecies would have been falsified. Had no wide-spread contentions arisen, no grievous wolves entered in, no false teachers among churchmen themselves brought in damnable heresies: had these things not occurred, the apostles would have been convicted as false prophets. Had not the general aspect of the church been one of apostasy, iniquity abounding, love waxing cold, and faith scarcely to be found, Christ himself would have been exhibited as a deceiver.

Together with these prophecies of evil, the church was supplied with great and precious promises of good. Her Lord had solemnly declared, that the gates or powers of hell should never prevail against her. He said to his disciples, “Whom do men say that I, the son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This was the grand truth, the foundation of all real religion among fallen men. God manifest in the flesh—Jesus the Son of man, the Messiah, the Son of the

living God ! Of him all the prophets had spoken, and under this figure among others, as a Rock, laid for a foundation, a sure foundation laid in Zion, on which whosoever believed, should not make haste. This was a truth beyond the reach of human reason. No man left to the unassisted powers of his natural mind ever did, nor ever could, attain to the discovery of it, or confidence in it when discovered. It was not a matter of science which "flesh and blood" could reach, but a matter of revelation, which only God himself could communicate. Happy is the man to whom this divine truth is so supernaturally revealed. Such an one is himself built up as a living stone upon the Rock of God. Such an one was St. Peter, as appeared by his knowledge of this truth. Addressing him as such an one, Christ said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jonah; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art a stone, (upon this rock,) and upon this rock I will build (not thee only but) my whole church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." To this agree the words of St. Peter himself, afterwards addressed to those who had obtained like precious faith with him. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, *ye also*, (together with me,) as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (1 Peter ii. 3—5.)

In addition to this promise of final infallible preservation against all the powers of darkness, the Lord has assured his disciples, in a passage already quoted, that he would be with them always, even unto the end of the world. He had said also for their consolation, “ Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” And again, “ My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me : and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all ; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand. I and my Father are one.” (John x. 27—30.)

Had the christian church been destroyed from off the face of the earth, these promises would have been falsified. Had no effectual preservation been extended, no little flock secured, no sheep infallibly held in the hand of Omnipotence, again would the Lord Jesus have been convicted as a deceiver.

Thus, in the outset or scriptural period of the church, we are supplied with a clue to the checkered history which follows. We are taught to anticipate contentions, corruptions, false teachers, damnable heresies, wide-spread and dominant apostasy ; and despite of all these, escaping and surviving all, we are to find Christ’s church, and Christ’s ministers, taught by the Holy Spirit, and teaching others as the Lord teaches them.

These two ; prophecies of ruinous apostasy, and

promises of sure preservation, although at first sight they may appear incompatible the one with the other, are nevertheless perfectly consistent ; and not only so, but by means of their co-operation many very important ends are answered.

They are consistent. Suppose a promise on divine authority, made to the inhabitants of a certain city, that health should never depart from that city ; that no disease, or combination of diseases, should ever prevail over the health of that city ; and suppose a prophecy on the same authority, that a great plague should infest that city—a plague so inveterate as to baffle human cure, and so widespread as to reach young and old, rich and poor, of every class and denomination in the city :—then, if every individual in the city continued healthy, and none took the plague, the prophecy is falsified : or if every individual in the city took the plague, and none remained healthy, the promise is broken. But if a plague arose, and spread throughout the city so frightfully that apprehensions were entertained that none would be left, so that concerning a long expected physician it would be proverbially said, shall he find health in the city at his coming ? and if, all the while, some continued perfectly healthy, and others who were attacked for a season, recovered again and continued healthy, then both promise and prophecy stand good.

Neither is this mere supposition, but actual history. For thus it was in Israel. To the Jewish nation were made promises of sure and infallible

preservation. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, said the Lord. “ Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed ; for I am thy God : I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” (Isaiah xli. 10.)

To the Jewish nation were at the same time given prophecies of degradation and dispersion ; they should be cut off, and cast away out of the sight of the Lord their God. How could both of these stand ? How could both promise and prophecy be fulfilled ? This is precisely the question which the apostle answers concerning the circumcised, and teaches us to answer concerning the baptized community.

St. Paul had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart because of the degradation and dispersion of his nation, his kinsmen according to the flesh. Saying this, and perceiving how apparently inconsistent it was with the promises of indefeasible security made to them, he immediately adds, “ Not as though the word of God had taken *none* effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.” Here the distinction for which we contend is clearly made. And again he says, “ Hath God cast away his people ? God forbid God hath not cast away his people, *which he foreknew.*”

This distinction between a people cast away, and a people not cast away, is followed by an historical illustration, which places the matter, so far as Israel was concerned, beyond all reasonable doubt. The

conclusion the apostle comes to is, “ Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for ; but *the election* hath obtained it, and *the rest* were blinded.”

A similar distinction amongst the baptized harmonises the Scriptures. The election is preserved in faith and holiness, and safety, and the rest apostatise. We are fully justified in instituting this comparison by the language of St. Peter, who, when predicting the false teachers about to bring heresies and destruction into the christian church, expressly compares them to the false prophets who did likewise in Israel. And this view of the case is confirmed by our Lord’s description of the great tribulation of the last times. “ Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”

It will be possible to deceive all *the rest*, and therein the prophecies of corruption and apostasy shall find fulfilment; but it will not be possible to deceive *the elect*, and therein the promises of infallible preservation shall find fulfilment. Augustine said, with reference to our Lord’s conversations, *distinguite tempora, et concordabunt scripturæ*. We may with equal truth, in reference to the case now before us, say, distinguish between *the persons*, and the Scriptures will harmonize.

There are, indeed, some who refuse to make this

distinction, who reject wholly this view of election, and who consider it little short of profane, to say, that there is a spiritual church in the midst of the baptized ; possessing in truth and power those blessings of salvation, which *the rest* possess only in name and profession ; and “ feeding in their hearts by faith with thanksgiving ” upon Him, of whom the rest only talk, whether in empty commemoration or in carnal fancy of transubstantiated bread. How such persons harmonize the scriptures already quoted, with their views of the visible church, is a matter for grave consideration. If the church, in their view of it, has continued faithful, where is the predicted apostasy ? where the inspiration of those who predicted it ? If the church has apostatised, where is the promised indefeasible security ? where the inspiration of those who promised it ? But if “ church ” have a twofold meaning as “ Israel ” had, and we say truly that “ all are not the church mystical who are of the church visible,” then prophecy and promise have their appropriate subjects, and concordabunt scripturæ.

By this arrangement, thus shown to be scriptural, very important results are attained.

Among creatures everything is comparative. This is one of the essential conditions of a *creature*, as such. With God nothing is comparative. He is neither restricted by limits, nor affected by contrast. All is absolute with him. A thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years : a planet’s orbit is as a needle’s eye, and a needle’s eye

as a planet's orbit ; to create a universe is as to uphold an insect, and to uphold an insect as to create a universe. But among creatures, of whatever grade, there is a limit, a *ne plus ultra* in everything, with reference to which everything is comparative : and among fallen creatures (incapable of absolutely disinterested estimates of positive perfection) the most powerful and penetrating impressions are made by *contrast*.

We seem incapable of receiving very strong impressions, except by contrast. It has become proverbial, that all our blessings are made to wear an aspect of enhanced value by their loss, or by some manifested risk of losing them. If health were the possession of all, and always ; it would soon be comparatively despised as a common thing : but when some prevailing epidemic rages, and *almost every body* is sick ; then, in the contrast, health is prized, it is no longer carelessly looked upon as matter of course, and those who enjoy it are in a manner compelled to think of, and to thank, the gracious Giver of it. Had the body of the baptized, as it spread through the nations, and became the church catholic, continued spiritually prosperous, vitally healthy ; had there been no heretical teaching, no prevailing apostasy, no ecclesiastical plague ; had kings at once and everywhere become her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers, and nations her willing subjects : then, all her blessings would soon have been comparatively despised as common things. She would have become satisfied

in herself as the possessor of such treasures, and her God, the giver, would have been practically forgotten. Such views of the church's prosperity did, in point of fact, lead to the great apostasy whose characteristic language is, "I am rich, I sit as a queen, and shall see no sorrow."

But when heresies arose, and multitudes were led away into error ; when false teachers prevailed, and gross corruptions were sanctioned by authority, when men of high station, and extensive learning, and exemplary character in all that met the eye of their fellow men, departed from the faith, so that the way of truth was evil spoken of ; when but few faithful witnesses were found, and those few persecuted ; when the prophecies of destruction seemed on the eve of complete fulfilment, and the promises of preservation seemed in jeopardy as ready to be falsified ; then, in the contrast, the orthodoxy and faithfulness of a few became highly prized ; they could not be considered as matters of course, for they were comparatively rare ; they could not be considered as matters of church ordinance, for men in full communion with the church, baptized in due form, and in the weekly enjoyment of every outward service, had fallen away ; they could not be considered as matters of education, for some of the most highly educated had departed from the faith : Whence then were they ? Grace ! grace ! The hand of God was seen in these things.

Whence was it, that England and England's church were rescued from the apostasy of the na-

tions, and kept faithful unto God ; even as the election was kept from the apostasy of the baptized ?

Attention was in a manner forced upon him who made the promise, and whose power and truth were exhibited in the continued fulfilment of it under adverse circumstances ; and the church of Christ never shone more conspicuously to the praise and glory of her Lord, than when baptized professors became her deadly persecutors. She had been a witness against the polytheism of the heathen, when she was thrown to the lions in a pagan amphitheatre, and the contrast was glorious. But “ that which was glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth ;” and the “ far more exceeding glory ” of the church’s contrast was exhibited, when, surviving not only perils among strangers which were great, but also perils among false brethren which were greater, because more subtle and ensnaring, and becoming a witness against the idolatrous corruption of Christianity itself, she joyfully embraced the burning fagot, or was rent upon the torturing rack in the papal inquisition.

LECTURE III.

THE CHURCH POSSESSED OF INSTRUMENTALITY WHICH REACHES TO RULERS, AS WELL AS SUBJECTS—RESPONSIBILITY OF RULERS WITH REFERENCE TO SUCH INSTRUMENTALITY—THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND WITH REFERENCE TO THE END IN VIEW—UNRESTRICTED USE OF THE BIBLE—THE VULGAR TONGUE IN WORSHIP—LITURGICAL FORMS OF PRAYER AND PRAISE—COMMEMORATIONS OF SCRIPTURAL FACTS—CONNEXION WITH THE STATE; SUCH CONNEXION NOT A MATTER OF CHOICE: INEVITABLE FROM THE NATURE OF THE CASE—THE QUESTION IS, OF WHAT CHARACTER SHALL IT BE—OF WELL-REGULATED UNION, SECURING MUTUAL LIBERTY?—OR OF USURPATION AND PROSTRATION, LEADING TO TYRANNY ON THE ONE SIDE, AND SLAVERY ON THE OTHER?

OUR attention has been called, first, to the great end or object of the christian church, with reference to which all instrumentality must be judged; and, secondly, to the *character* of the instrumentality appointed in the holy Scriptures.

We have seen in “intellectual conceit,” as Hooker expresses it, the church or body of Christ, *the fulness (mystically) of Him* in his human members, *who (in his divine nature) filleth all in all*, the

jewels, as the Lord by the prophet calls them, wherewith he will adorn himself in the day of his glory. We have seen, also, the constitution of the visible society of the baptized, the casket containing the jewels, and called by the name of its precious contents—the church. We have examined its component parts, the appointment of its officers in unbroken succession, and the nature of the divine commission under which they act. We have noticed the prophecies of apostasy, and promises of preservation, with which this church (combining in its ranks good and bad, wise and foolish, wheat and tares, *the elect* and *the rest*) was launched upon the tide of this troublesome world: and we have glanced at one effect (to the praise of the glory of divine grace) attained by this combination of arrangement. Means are proved to be at best but means, and God is seen in all things as the only giver of success.

We proceed now to some further particulars of our ecclesiastical instrumentality, with a view of pointing out as before their accordance with the word of God, and thereby commanding them to the fearless adoption of sensible christian men, and urging their extension over the enormously increased population of our country.

The christian society, constituted as we have seen, supplied an instrumentality for the conversion to the faith of the gospel, (or at least to a profession of that faith,) not of subjects only, but of sovereigns also. God is no respecter of persons,

or ranks, on either side. True it is, indeed, that from reasons connected with the pride of human intellect, with the possessions, honours, and consequent entanglements of this world, not many wise men of the flesh, not many rich, not many mighty, not many noble, received the testimony of the gospel to the saving of their souls : but though not many did so, still there were some, some at the very outset in Cæsar's household ; and the instrumentality which reached and subdued them, was powerful, in God's good time, to reach and subdue their imperial master. No sovereign, so reached, and brought personally under christian influence, could be blind to the efficiency of such an instrumentality ; or insensible to the weight of responsibility devolving upon himself with regard to the use he should make, or at the least endeavour to make of it, on behalf of his people. Becoming personally a member of Christ's Church, he became responsible not only for the performance of his *quondam* duties as a sovereign, from new principles and motives ; but also for the performance of *new duties* as a christian sovereign, providentially placed in a condition to avail himself of a new christian instrumentality.

Accordingly, when the christian society extended itself so as to reach the throne as well as the cottage, kings and princes availed themselves of the officers and ordinances of the church ; making God's instruments for eternal salvation to be at the same time, and by the same means, their instru-

ments for national civilisation, instruction, subordination and peace. The rulers of this world require such instrumentality; because their subjects are *men*, intelligent, responsible, immortal creatures, who cannot be properly managed in time (possessing and not abusing liberty) unless they are under instruction for eternity. And the ministers of the christian church rejoiced in being so employed, because they were thereby enabled to enlarge the sphere of their gracious labours, carrying the name and truth of their heavenly Master into every nook and corner of their earthly master's dominions.

It is as means toward the attainment of that end, as scaffolding towards the erection of that building, and not for their own sakes, that we supremely value our own nationally established opportunities.

Here I must endeavour, once more, to exhibit the right adaptation of our means, by contrast, not with the desultory efforts of those who can scarcely be said to have a system at all; but with the deliberate system of those whose aim is to monopolise the instrumentality of Christendom.

If the end aimed at in an ecclesiastical establishment be temporal: if spiritual and eternal things be introduced only hypocritically, in order to make the achings of human conscience subserve the interests of human policy: if the grand design of that policy be to stifle freedom of inquiry and thought and speech, as far as the inherent and indomitable principles of our common nature will permit, and

so effectually to subjugate the kingdoms of the world to the hierarchy of the church : it would be difficult to conceive a system of means more skilfully contrived than the papal system. Its end is supremacy on earth. Its means are the actual rewards and punishments of time, with an arrogated dominion over, and arbitrary disposal of the rewards and punishments of eternity — the latter made to lend their hopes and terrors by anticipation, to give effect to the former. A boasted power to alter the condition of the dead, is wielded as an engine of tyranny over the conscience and natural affections of the living ; so that, rejection of the arrogant pretension, that is, infidelity in the system, is the only escape from mental degradation, pecuniary mulcts, compulsory service, and all the other features of personal and national slavery.

If, on the contrary, the end aimed at in an ecclesiastical establishment be spiritual and eternal ; if temporal arrangements be introduced honestly, not for their own sake, whether of power or profit in this world, but as passing instruments for the attainment of everlasting benefits ; the extension of the instrumentality still keeping in view not its own aggrandisement, but the more universal and effectual diffusion on its framework of the blessings of true religion, promoting peace, qualifying for liberty, and leading to eternal life ; it will be found difficult to imagine, even in theory, a system of means more admirably adapted to such lofty purposes, than the system laid down (would it were consistently

followed up, and actually practised even to the extent of her ability,) by our own national church establishment.

In this contrast, there is no real ground for supposing, that even as regards *temporal good order*, the balance inclines to the side of the papal system. But there is danger here. Tossed and wearied on the ebb and flow of free interminable discussion, the statesman, as well as the theologian, is tempted, in the very listlessness of lassitude, to seek peace even at the risk of liberty. Amidst the storms of popular collision, he discovers no haven for national rest, no course to steer of positive decided policy, with reasonable hope of uniting a sufficient number of the discordant elements to ensure success ; beaten down and disheartened, the danger is, lest, in despair of safe intelligent freedom, he fall back, as a choice of evils, into the bosom of despotism ; lest, unable any longer to endure the ceaseless energy of free inquiry, and justifying himself by the magnified apprehension that it can lead to nothing but infidelity, he sink down to hide and rest under the mantle of arrogated infallibility.

But never did man fall a victim to a more egregious delusion than this. For, independent of the present sacrifice of liberty, and the impossibility of reposing real tranquillising confidence in his new masters ; the temporal good order attained by the papal system is such as can never be depended upon, for stability or continuance. It can scarcely be dignified with the title of intelligence. It ap-

proaches as near to unquestioning and irresponsible mechanism, as it is possible to degrade the human mind. Its boasted power is a mixture of ignorance and terror. It is liable to explosion at any moment. A bold spirit, bursting from the surrounding shackles, ardent in the pursuit of freedom, sincere in the ennobling enthusiasm, unchecked by any self-reproaching consciousness of faction, and giving daring utterance to what thousands have been thinking, or half thinking, in dogged hopeless sullenness; shakes the whole fabric, scatters what seemed to be the foundations of social order like chaff from a summer threshing floor, and proclaims the utter and essential incompatibility between mind and coercion; between truth (which is but another name for liberty here and hereafter) and the interested inventions and designing tyrannies of priesthood.

Whereas, on the other side, the measure of order and peace attained under our national system, has nothing to fear from the progress of intelligence. It is not based upon suppression or concealment. Its strenuous aim, when legitimately administered, is universal instruction, in order that truth may become so practically powerful, as to render every species of force entirely superfluous. The boldest inquirer cannot damage it, because it cordially and fearlessly invites every man to inquire boldly, to examine thoroughly, to judge as a reasonable, responsible, immortal creature, to prove all things, and hold fast only that which is good.

But, more particularly. The practical details of ecclesiastical instrumentality must be divided into two classes.

First, Those which are revealed in the letter of them, being expressly and by name enjoined in the word of God. And,

Secondly, Those which are implied in the general directions of Scripture, but the particulars of which are left to the judgment and discretion of christian men, to be filled up in accordance with scriptural principles.

I. It might have been hoped that, at least on those points which are matter of express and literal commandment by God himself, no controversy would ever have arisen. But the fact has been lamentably otherwise.

(1.) It is difficult to imagine anything more express and plain than the divine commandment is with respect to reading of the holy Scriptures by old and young ; and yet on this point, simple and unexceptionable as it seems, the most disastrous differences have arisen. The papal system has imposed checks and restrictions and conditions upon the free use of the Scriptures by the people, which, without committing her in so many words, to an absolute prohibition ; have nevertheless amounted in practice to a general neglect of the Bible. Our national church is here scriptural to the letter. She enjoins upon all the diligent study of the Bible. Simple as this is, and happily now so familiar to us all, it should not be overlooked as a fundamental

excellence of our national establishment. It is the best pledge she can hold out of her *sincerity* at least, as a witness for God. She neither restricts the use, nor mutilates the contents, of God's glorious and perfect revelation of his will. Neither does she elevate any other testimony, however venerable in itself, into a position of parallel authority with the Bible. In her keeping and use, inspired and non-inspired remain as distinct as heaven and earth.

(2.) Secondly. Scripture is express upon the use, for worship in the church, of a language understood by the people.

On this point, also, the common sense and common feeling of mankind are so entirely in accordance with the word of God, that our attention would probably never have been specially called to the excellence of our church practice, but for the painful contrast exhibited by a counter-practice in that system of public worship which is undeniably and universally under apostolical condemnation as a barbarian, in the persevering use of an unknown tongue. The excellence of our church in this respect as a *national* blessing, ministering to all in their own national language, is worthy of all commendation. The nature of the ministration also, in a carefully prepared, scriptural, and devotional liturgy, deserves a distinguished place in the consideration of all who desire either to glorify God, or to benefit their fellow men.

Our Lord Jesus Christ made a scourge of small cords and went into the temple in Jerusalem, and

drove out all the money-changers, and them that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and said, “ It is written, *my house shall be called the house of PRAYER.*” There was either something in his appearance and manner on this occasion, or some secret exercise of supernatural power over the hearts of men, which seems to have prevented even a parley from the ejected offenders. The Jewish worshippers who came from distant parts of the country, found it inconvenient to bring with them the animals which they required to offer in sacrifice. To meet this necessity, there were persons who had made it their business to have ready in Jerusalem such animals as were usually required. In addition to this, there were money-changers in readiness, that if any of the provincial worshippers came up with coins not generally passable in the metropolis, they might exchange them for the current coins, charging a discount. Such convenience was allowed to the worshipper from the distant tribes, by the language of the law, (Deut. xiv. 24—27,) and such traffic might doubtless have been carried on in all honesty of purpose and integrity of dealing; but to bring it within the consecrated courts of the temple, was to profane that holy place. *Take these things hence,* said the Lord, *make not my Father's house an house of merchandise;* and again, My house shall be called the House of *Prayer.*

An opinion, or if not a distinctly formed opinion, yet at least a strong feeling, seems to have gained very general prevalence, that *preaching* is the most

important part of divine service. This has become so familiar, that it is habitually acknowledged in common conversation, and instead of fellow-worshippers of God together with their minister, men are called, and heedlessly call themselves, his *hearers*. If they have worshipped with him for any considerable time, they describe it as having *sat under* his ministry. Lively interest is excited about the sermon, where, from the character and talents of the minister, an instructive and faithful sermon is expected ; and our church service is not, as it ought to be, anticipated beforehand, and entered into at the time, as the common and delightful privilege of the assembled congregation. Neither is this applicable to those only who openly object to our written forms of prayer. It falls with all its censure upon many who profess, and who doubtless sincerely feel, an attachment to our established church ; but who nevertheless have fallen into the sad habit of manifesting a deplorable indifference to her spiritual liturgy. I mention this, because nothing tends so much to depreciate the excellence of the liturgical branch of our church's instrumentality in the eyes of those who are without, and thereby to confirm the prejudices against it, as the irreverent, or even cold and formal, use of it among those that are within.

It is gratifying in the highest degree, and full of encouragement and hope for our country, to know that such indifference to our services, whether manifested by coming late into the congregation, or by

vacancy or levity of manner when there, is rapidly becoming the exception, the rare exception, in our churches.

Preaching is an admirable ordinance. It was appointed by Christ himself, and is especially honoured by the secret life-giving energy of the holy Spirit, as the power of God and the wisdom of God ; for startling the slumbering sinner out of his lethargy of worldliness, and bringing him, for peace of conscience and reconciliation with an offended God, to the atoning blood of the great sacrifice once offered, and once for all, Jesus Christ and him crucified ; for edifying and comforting in their risen High Priest those who are already reconciled, and guiding their steps in the practical details of daily duty (after the example of His most holy life,) into that conscientious obedience, whose ways are ways of pleasantness, and all whose paths are peace. But admirable and excellent as preaching is, it can never supply the place of prayer.

Preaching is mainly addressed to the understandings of men, and containing, as it does, the interpretations of a fallen fellow-creature, who at the best is fallible ; wise men will try it, they will prove all things said, they will search the Scriptures whether these things be so, and they will hold fast that only which is good. Thus, in hearing a preacher, you are not at liberty to divest yourselves of intellectual watchfulness. You ought not to allow yourselves to be run away with. The same caution must apply to extemporaneous prayer. The senti-

ments uttered, whether in confession, supplication, or thanksgiving, may or may not be scripturally correct; and until you weigh them in the judgment of your understanding, you cannot properly and fervently adopt them as the expression of your heart's desire before God. In listening to them from fallible man, you are bound to try and judge before you cordially appropriate.

Now what is PRAYER? Is it listening to a man, or is it speaking to God? Doubtless, prayer is addressing God. It is not a sense of impressions from without, whether from the eyes or ears, or both: neither is it the judging and discriminating process of the intellect: but it is the activity of the spirit in man, stirring up his sense of want and anxiety for supply, and hope of success; that he may lay hold upon God in the sacred and chastened vehemence of spiritual effort. The kingdom of heaven suffereth such consecrated violence, *and the violent take it by force.*

How is this inward effort to be made in the public congregation? If words are to be the vehicle of it, they must be words already known, and approved of. Our worship of God is a reasonable service. If conducted in the silence of our own spirit, there should be *no interrupting words* uttered by any one.
If conducted by words, we cannot throw our spirit unreservedly into it, unless those words have been previously approved of by our reason. Both the object of the worship and the subject matter of the prayer must have obtained the approbation of our

understanding. I read it, and compare it with the word of God. I find in it, that God alone is worshipped in, and by, Jesus Christ the only mediator. This commends itself to me as right. I find in it confessions of sin, and weakness, and helplessness; petitions for repentance, and pardon, and peace, and guidance, and preservation from all evil; humble and hearty thanks for mercies, temporal and spiritual. All is right: well, I then join in the worship of God according to this arrangement. I am assured that nothing, but what I have thus approved, shall be said; and thus, the reasonable part of the service being provided for, I am prepared to dismiss all suspicions, all suspense, all lingering cooling caution, and to throw my whole heart into the burning sacrifice. I am no longer a listener only, but a worshipper also. I know beforehand everything that is to be spoken; anticipating every sentiment, and appropriating its meaning both personally and collectively, my soul kindles in the surrounding warmth of kindred spirits, and my tongue seals my heart's consent with a deep Amen. This I could not do, if I were in ignorance or doubt of what is to be spoken. I must then, in my own defence, be a reserved and cautious listener, I could not dare to be an unsuspecting impassioned worshipper.

It has been argued that without written forms, the church may have sufficient security against the introduction of error, in the known piety and orthodoxy of her ministers.

The answer to this leads to another advantage attending our liturgy, derived from the undeniable imperfection and uncertainty of all individual instruments. For granting the utmost that can be pleaded for the piety and orthodoxy of any man ; and granting that in extemporaneous prayer he would not introduce a single incorrect, or even unworthy expression, (which is granting a great deal more than any pious minister in Christendom will feel applicable to himself,) still those ministers who are most spiritual will readily acknowledge that they have their seasons of comparative coldness and unfitness for the sacred office ; that they cannot at all times command such a flow of feeling and readiness of language as to be able to lead the devotions of a congregation with an appropriate fluency, solemnity, and variety.

Yet want of *variety* is another argument urged against our Liturgy, while in point of fact it contains a greater variety of feeling and matter, vastly more comprehensive of the combined states of mind and heart in an assembled congregation ; and affording incomparably more of favourable opportunity for tender mutual sympathy ; than the extemporaneous prayer, however extended, of the most accomplished minister.

But now the complaint against our Liturgy is urged on the ground of *sameness*. Although admitted to contain variety in itself, yet it is urged that, owing to the sameness and repetition of the forms, the worship becomes formal. I have already

assigned one reason, and a powerful one, for looking upon its sameness as an excellence; and I would now add a second. The character of God being always the same, and the condition of his church militant here on earth being substantially the same, until his coming again, the right worship of the church demands no deviation from sameness. If it be rejoined, but the condition and circumstances of individuals and of families varies exceedingly, and does demand a corresponding variety in the matter of devotion; the answer is, we are not now speaking of the prayers of individuals, whether in the closet or the private family, but of the prayers of *the church*. And in reply to the objection that our worship becomes formal, we say that the right remedy for this consists, not in the change of the language of the prayer which alters the whole character of the service into a passive reception of impressions from without; but in an increase of the piety of the worshipper, which originates the inward energy of spiritual activity.

Another excellence I must point out, which consists in the *responses* by the congregation. By means of these the people *accompany* the minister. They are manifestly not hearers only, but worshippers also. This is right and reasonable. If the worship be not confined to the minister, why should the language made use of be confined to the minister? If the people assemble and meet together to pray and praise, as well as to hear; why should they not

lift up their voices in prayer as well as praise, and magnify the Lord with their tongues, as well as in their heart? Undoubtedly it is desirable that they should, but how is it to be accomplished without confusion? If an assembled congregation are to speak out in prayer or praise, and each to say something of his own, impromptu, it would manifestly lead to distressing commotion. But if there be a prescribed and written form, which all may use together, or alternately according to arrangement, this will meet the case. It is at once personal and collective. Each utters the feeling of all, and all of each. By this simple process we attain a happy mixture of liberty and order. This is peculiar to our church. Where prayer is extemporeaneous, it is manifest that the congregation cannot join in it, or any part of it, with the voice; we have already seen that it is difficult to appropriate it *as prayer* even in heart, but to join in voice is clearly out of the question. There is no liberty for any hearer in such congregations to utter a sound in prayer. There is order doubtless, but it is the order suitable to preaching, not to prayer; the order of silent listeners to a man, not of simultaneous worshippers of God.

If it be said, but they all join in *praise*. This is freely admitted. They do so, but in so doing, and in order to do so, they are compelled to adopt, so far, our church method, and to use written forms. They cannot sing extemporaneous psalms or hymns:

there is *sameness* in their singing : and yet I quite believe them when they say that their singing is not *formal*.

And on this ground I would appeal to them experimentally, and claim an acknowledgment from them, (an acknowledgment which I have pleasure in saying I have frequently, and candidly, and most handsomely received from dissenters,) that as their singing the same hymn over and over again, and to the same tune, is not necessarily formal, so neither need our repeating of the same prayers over and over again, be formal.

Our object in this statement is not to find fault, but simply to exhibit more clearly by the contrast, what I conceive to be an excellence of inestimable value in our church : and thereupon again to commend her, for universal extension among the people. There is a sweet savour to God, there is a sanctifying power to the Christian, and there is a humanizing influence to the whole community, in the tone of our liturgical services.

Another excellence, of the practical value of which we may all have seen many interesting instances, presents itself in our anniversaries of *facts* in the sacred history. Christianity is founded upon facts. Scriptural facts are the foundation of sound doctrines. And those doctrines which emanate the most easily and naturally from the facts of the case, by what Lord Bacon called the “first pressure” of the grape, will always be found most nutritious to the Lord’s family.

It is of more value than may readily be imagined to have those great facts laid regularly before the church, in the language of the holy Scripture. Scriptural facts are rectifiers of theological theories. They supply a living boundary line, against any serious departure from the ancient faith. Such a guard surrounds our church. It is true that where there is no liturgical anniversary, still these facts may be brought forward by the minister: but it is equally true, that they may *not* be brought forward; and it is certain that the ministers who require them most, as guards against any departure from orthodoxy, are precisely the ministers who are the least likely to revert to them. It is our happiness as a church, not to be left at the mercy of an individual, but to have a scriptural hedge around our vineyard; whatever may be the varying judgment or ability of our local vinedresser. The amount of permanent stability to the orthodoxy of our national Christianity, not only within the pale of the established church; but derived therefrom, however unconsciously to dissenters also; which may be traced to this source, is, I think, beyond calculation. Some little perception of it may be had by contrast supplied in the history of some celebrated congregations of Protestant dissenters. In the morning of their conscientious non-conformity upon other matters, they could still say, as regarded christian doctrine, and did say in the language of Dr. John Owen—

“ That which is of most special regard and

consideration unto us, is that of the Church of England, declared in the articles of religion : and herein in particular, what is purely doctrinal, we fully embrace, and constantly adhere to. And though we shall not compare ourselves with others, in ability to assert, teach, and maintain it ; yet we cannot, whilst we are conscious unto ourselves of our integrity in our cordial adherence to it, but hear with regret the clamorous accusations of some against us, for departing from the Church of England, who have not given that testimony of *their* adherence unto its doctrine which we have done, and by the help of God shall continue to do.”¹

Where the doctrinal articles of the Church of England have been retained as a standard for subscription, the determination thus piously expressed has been successfully maintained. But where our standard has been withdrawn, and subscription to it, on the part of their ministers, has been discontinued ; what has been the consequence ? Methinks I hear a response from the conscious walls within which Matthew Henry expounded the mind of God on earth, and Baxter sang of the enjoyment of God in heaven ! Alas for the desolation ! How have the orthodox fallen away ! How have the faithful anticipations of the fathers of non-conformity (rich in the possession of an established standard, wisely retained and candidly commended) been frustrated by their comparatively unwise children, who seem to have confounded subscription

¹ Plea for Liberty of Conscience.

to a standard with coercion of conscience ; and to have imagined that the legitimate exercise of private judgment demanded the suppression of every human formula ! And now, in some of their congregations most celebrated in their beginnings, we look for biblical exposition, but behold socinian infidelity ; we wait for the sweet sounds of the saints' everlasting rest, but hark to the contentious janglings of a liberalized philosophy.

I cannot dismiss the subject of our precious formularies, without expressing my deep concern at the occasion too frequently given to our opponents to find fault, and to our best friends to grieve, by the manner in which the prayers of the church are read by her pastors. I entertain an unfeigned respect ; nay more, I cultivate a sincere brotherly kindness towards my brethren in the ministry ; but I would have that kindness estimated, not by the selfishness which excludes the sympathising feeling, nor by the cowardice which withholds the painful expostulation, nor by the treachery which repeats the remark in their absence ; but by the honest frankness, which, without designing to give, and therefore without fearing to provoke offence, proclaims before them all, and before the world, a brother's grief at the unimpressed and consequently unimpressive manner, to say the least of it, in which too many of them, week after week, read our beautiful services.

(3.) But we must now advance to matters of a very different complexion in our ecclesiastical instrumentality.

It is difficult to imagine anything more express and plain, than the divine commandment is with respect to the submission of the christian church to the civil power. I must cite the well-known language of the apostles. “ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God : the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God : and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power ? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same : for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid ; for he beareth not the sword in vain : for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.” (Rom. xiii. 1—5.) “ Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake : whether it be to the king, as supreme ; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.” (1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.)

The right interpretation of this language in its practical application, direct and implied, points out the political position, that is, the position, relatively with the civil ruler, which it is the will of God should be occupied by his church ; and therefore

involves the question of what is commonly called “the union between church and state.”

In discussing this subject, confusion is frequently incurred by speaking concerning the church and the state as two distinct bodies, without sufficiently defining our terms. In point of fact, considered in the persons composing them, they are not distinct bodies. Although our population has in this respect undergone a change since the days of Hooker, it may still be said most truly, as regards the vast majority of Englishmen, that church and state, considered in the persons composing them, are identical. The members of the church are all citizens. The members of the state, speaking comparatively, I may say, are nearly all churchmen. It is utterly impossible to separate them, under this aspect; and it is right, for clearness sake, to introduce this, preparatory to a discussion of them under other aspects.

It will be found to simplify such discussions very much, if, instead of using the indefinite terms church and state, as entering into any union, or as possible to be disunited; we adopt the specific terms which designate the executives of the two bodies, and speak of the clergy and the government. What I now proceed to prove is, that there must be some union, or relation, or alliance, or compact, (call it what you will,) entered into between the clergy of the church, and the government of the country. If there be none of design

and arrangement, there will be one wrought out of necessity. The question is not, shall there be a union, but of what description shall the union be ? I repeat, *some* union is absolutely inevitable from the nature of things ; and I hope in a few words to make good this assertion.

The clergy of the christian church have certain duties prescribed by God himself, which they must perform. They have no choice. If the duties now referred to be not performed, there ceases to be a church altogether : and if they be performed, they must affect the government one way or other, and so lead to some connexion.

It is the scriptural duty of the clergy to preach the faith once delivered to the saints ; to administer the sacraments which were ordained by Christ himself ; to determine who are, and who are not, to be admitted to those sacraments ; to fill up and to add their own body ; to appoint their own successors ; and to urge upon all the members of the church, from the word of God himself, the christian duty of supporting those ministers. It will not be denied that these are functions so inseparable from the very being of a christian clergy, that if they be not performed, there ceases to be a clergy, or a church.

If they be performed, mark the inevitable results ! So long as man is what he is, a creature under the alternate influence of sinful inclination, and reproving conscience ; the one stimulated by the objects of this present world, the other by the apprehension at least, if not the secret conviction, of

eternity ; an organised body performing the above-mentioned functions must obtain practical power over him, for either good or evil.

Consider, then, the position of the clergy. They are but men, and must not on a national scale be estimated by the exceptions, but by the rule of our common nature. This is one of the conditions of what I have already shown to be scriptural—a visible church. As such, it is no libel against them to say, that unchecked power is dangerous in their hands. Appealing to the strongest affections of the human heart, hope, fear, love, conscience, gratitude, generosity ; representing the sacraments of the church as *generally*, perhaps tempted to say *absolutely*, necessary to salvation, and themselves as the only persons by whom those sacraments can be administered ; it is beyond all question, that unless subjected to some regulating restriction from without ; they will, they must, in process of time, and from the bulk of mankind, obtain an extravagant power, and an enormous wealth. The temptations of their position will become such, as no large class of men, as such, can be reasonably expected to withstand.

Multitudes with sinful and fearful hearts will look up to them as the arbiters of their happiness here and hereafter. Under the pungent clamours of awakened conscience, the sacraments of the church will be appealed to, as a city of refuge ; and the keepers, the only keepers of the city, will find that they may dictate their own terms on which to open the gates.

Thus superstition will give, and avarice will receive, and ambition will abuse until all other authority sinks before the priesthood. The priesthood so aggrandised will consolidate its own power, by the appointment of a chief or centre of unity ; a reference to whom will at once cover the odium, and secure the permanence of their practical supremacy. Is not this the easy, the natural, the unavoidable course of things, supposing a church in a country without any *regulating* union with the civil power ? And must not such a course as unavoidably lead to a union of a very different character ? A union not of regulation, but of prostration, the terms of which shall be *Pontifex Dominus, et Imperator servus* ? In point of fact, is not this history ?

First. Mr. Hallam, after describing the extensive possessions which the clergy had obtained, even under the pagan emperors, and secured either by concealment or connivance, as the Roman law did not permit a tenure of lands in mortmain ; proceeds to give this account of the practices of the clergy, upon the conquering nations of the north.

“ The devotion of the conquering nations, as it was still less enlightened than that of the subjects of the empire, so was it still more munificent. They left, indeed, the worship of Hesus and Taranis in their forests ; but they retained the elementary principles of that and of all barbarous idolatry, a superstitious reverence for the priesthood, a credulity

that seemed to invite imposture, and a confidence in the efficacy of gifts to expiate offences. Of this temper it is undeniable that the ministers of religion, influenced, probably, not so much by personal covetousness as by zeal for the interests of their order, took advantage. Many of the peculiar and prominent characteristics in the faith and discipline of those ages, appear to have been either introduced, or sedulously promoted, for the purposes of sordid fraud. To those purposes conspired the veneration of relics, the worship of images, the idolatry of saints and martyrs, the religious inviolability of sanctuaries, the consecration of cemeteries; but, above all, the doctrine of purgatory, and masses for the relief of the dead. A creed thus contrived, operating upon the minds of barbarians, lavish though rapacious, and devout though dissolute, naturally caused a torrent of opulence to pour in upon the church. Donations of land were continually made to the bishops, and in still more ample proportion to the monastic foundations.”²

“ Large private estates, or, as they were termed, patrimonies, not only within their own dioceses, but sometimes in distant countries, sustained the dignity of the principal sees, and especially that of Rome. The French monarchs of the first dynasty, the Carlovingian family and their great chief, the Saxon line of emperors, the kings of England and Leon, set hardly any bounds to their liberality, as

² Hallam’s Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 200.

numerous charters still extant in diplomatic collections attest.”³

“ Some gave their property to the church before entering on military expeditions ; gifts were made by some to take effect after their lives, and bequests by many in the terrors of dissolution. Even those legacies to charitable purposes, which the clergy could with more decency and speciousness recommend, and of which the administration was generally confined to them, were frequently applied to their own benefit. They failed not, above all, to inculcate upon the wealthy sinner, that no atonement could be so acceptable to Heaven as liberal presents to its earthly delegates. To die without allotting a portion of worldly wealth to pious uses was accounted almost like suicide, or a refusal of the last sacraments ; and hence intestacy passed for a sort of fraud upon the church, which she punished by taking the administration of the deceased’s effects into her own hands.”⁴

“ The canonical penances imposed upon repentant offenders, extravagantly severe in themselves, were commuted for money or for immovable possessions ; a fertile though scandalous source of monastic wealth, which the popes afterwards diverted into their own coffers by the usage of dispensations and indulgences.”⁵

“ These passages are very remarkable, and afford a decisive proof that the power obtained by national

³ Hallam’s Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 201.

⁴ Ib. p. 203.

⁵ Ib. p. 204.

churches, through the superstitious prejudices then received, and a train of favourable circumstances, was as dangerous to civil government, as the subsequent usurpations of the Roman pontiff.”⁶

Secondly. In the legal history of our country, we have the matter thus discussed by Mr. Justice Blackstone:—“Alienation in *mortmain*, in *mortui manu*, is an alienation of lands or tenements to any corporation, sole or aggregate, ecclesiastical or temporal. But these purchases having been made chiefly by religious houses, in consequence whereof the lands became perpetually inherent in one dead hand, this hath occasioned the general appellation of mortmain to be applied to such alienations, and the religious houses themselves to be principally considered in forming the Statutes of Mortmain: in deducing the history of which statutes, it will be matter of curiosity to observe the great address and subtle contrivance of the ecclesiastics in eluding, from time to time, the laws in being, and the zeal with which successive parliaments have pursued them through all their finesses,—how new remedies were still the parents of new evasions, till the legislature at last, though with difficulty, hath obtained a decisive victory.”⁷

“Another engine set on foot, or at least greatly improved, by the court of Rome, was a masterpiece of papal policy. Not content with the ample provision of tithes which the law of the land had given

⁶ Hallam’s Middle Ages, vol. ii. p. 222.

⁷ Blackstone, vol. ii. p. 268.

to the parochial clergy, they endeavoured to grasp at the lands and inheritances of the kingdom, and (had not the legislature withheld them) would by this time have probably been masters of every foot of ground in the kingdom. To this end they introduced the monks of the Benedictine and other rules,—men of sour and austere religion, separated from the world and its concerns by a vow of perpetual celibacy, yet fascinating the minds of the people by pretences to extraordinary sanctity, while all their aim was to aggrandize the power and extend the influence of their grand superior, the Pope. And as, in those times of civil tumult, great rapines and violence were daily committed by overgrown lords and their adherents, they were taught to believe that founding a monastery a little before their deaths would atone for a life of incontinence, disorder, and bloodshed. Hence innumerable abbeys and religious houses were built within a century after the Conquest, and endowed, not only with the tithes of parishes which were ravished from the secular clergy, but also with lands, manors, and lordships, and extensive baronies. And the doctrine inculcated was, that whatever was given to, or purchased by, the monks and friars, was consecrated to God himself; and that to alienate or take it away, was no less than the sin of sacrilege.”⁸

Thirdly. We have this acknowledgment in the words of our opponents in this controversy. Dr. Wardlaw, speaking of the church in the days of

⁸ Blackstone, vol. iv. p. 108.

Constantine, says,—“The resources of the church at the time, arising from the operation (the superstitiously abused and unworthily stimulated operation, let it be allowed) of the voluntary principle, were such as, in the terms just cited, ‘to render a state endowment unnecessary.’”⁹

Yes, doubtless, a state endowment for the supply of the church was rendered unnecessary ; but, at the same time, and by the same means, a state enactment for the restraint of the church was rendered imperative, if civil liberty was to be maintained upon the earth.

Some such enactment is a matter of indispensable self-defence on the part of the civil ruler, to ward off the prostrating power of the clergy. He cannot, if he would, expatriate the church ; and, therefore, his only refuge from the thraldom of ecclesiastical tyranny lies in some such mutually regulating alliance with the clergy as will secure to them certain safe and manageable principles, in lieu of an indefinite power of aggression, which they consent to sacrifice.

We claim such an alliance, then, on behalf of the civil government, for the security of its liberties ; and on behalf of the clergy of the church visible, not for their temporal aggrandisement, (as many ignorantly suppose,) but for their salutary restraint and comparative purity ; in order that the temporal supremacy, which would otherwise be inevitably at

⁹ Lectures, p. 9.

their option, may not be allowed to tempt them into tyranny.

Should it be objected that these usurpations of the clergy belonged to a dark and ignorant age, and that it is utterly absurd to apprehend any possible recurrence of them in these days of advanced intelligence among the people; I would venture to reply that it evinces but slender knowledge of human nature to suppose that all such danger is past; as if any cultivation of man's intellect could essentially alter the feelings of his heart, or effectually silence the reproaches of his conscience.

No! In all that belongs to the real turning point of this question, human nature is unaltered, and, by any human process, unalterable. Conscience has been justly likened to a legitimate but dethroned monarch. The rightfulness of its claim is not disputed, although the power to enforce it is gone. The law of sin is the successful usurper; the fear of punishment is the lingering witness for the lawful sovereign. The indulgence of the usurper has its inevitable pauses, through satiety and divers infirmities; and during those pauses the faithful witness speaks. Its reproaches must be silenced; and for this purpose costly sacrifices are made willingly. Bare infidelity can never be popular. It invites to no sacrifice. It supplies no balm; not even untempered mortar to daub the tottering wall. The innate testimony of eternity in man cannot be so satisfied. There is indeed a *measure* of hardening contracted by every man through his indulgence of sin, but it reaches a

seared callousness only in a few. The multitude can never be divested of the paroxysms of conscience, therefore infidelity can never be popular. For a similar reason on the other side, *vital Christianity* can never be popular. It will enter into no truce with the usurper. It will allow no indulgence of sin ; nay, it so renews the soul, that sin is no longer considered an indulgence, but a plague ; and the unrenewed soul ever resists it as needlessly strict.

A system, to be popular, must be pliant. It must yield conveniently when sin reigns and conscience sleeps ; and it must be supplied with some apparently authoritative remedy and refuge when sin faints, and conscience awakes and stings. It must oscillate in parallels with human nature, from a carnival to a lent, from a revel to a penance, from rapacity to restitution, from dissoluteness to what it calls devotion. This will be popular with the multitude ; and some modification of this will be ready with the clergy. It can descend to grossness with the gross ; and it can, without altering its principle, rise into refinement with the refined. Yes, my present argument is based, not on the externals of society, which vary with the varying circumstances of clime and character and knowledge ; but on the unchanged and unchanging principles of our common nature. The wielders of the conscience will be also wielders of the purse, unless restrained by some salutary checks ; and in such hands there is no question that money is power. Only then let the checks be removed, let the regulating connexion

between the clergy and the government be dissolved, let all the statutes upon the subject, the statute of mortmain included, be repealed ; *all* the statutes ! for it would be a strange one-handed voluntaryism which would repeal the privileges, and leave the restraints unrepealed. Let there be, in short, a complete dissolution of all legislative connexion between the clergy and the government—and then guard yourselves, if you can, against the prostrating power of a pliant popular theology in the hands of a priesthood, who will soon be tempted by their multiplying opportunities to make merchandise of your souls, and slaves of your bodies.

If it be objected again, why dissenting ministers, who are under no trammels of state connexion, do not thus amass wealth, and consolidate power ? The answer is twofold. First, upon their own principles, they cannot, with any plausible hope of success, represent any ordinance or ordinances which are in their power exclusively to administer ; as necessary to salvation ; and therefore, except in a few cases of personal attachment, their influence cannot reach the prostrating point,¹ over

¹ I gladly avail myself of the following remarks on this part of the argument, sent to me by an intelligent friend who was present on the occasion :—“ It occurred to me that, in meeting the reply of the dissenters, your rejoinder might be extended and strengthened thus : We must ever bear in mind, that there are in the world, at all periods, several distinct classes of characters. There are the free and independent thinkers, those who demand ‘ to choose a religion ’ for themselves ; also the timid and relying, who cast themselves upon stronger minds for direc-

the conscience. And secondly, the national church stands in their way ; for any or all of their people, upon the slightest misunderstanding, or painful experience of their attempted discipline ; may leave the chapel, and find themselves invested with a right equal to any of their neighbours in the parish, to a seat in the parish church, and a place at the parish font, and access to the parish communion table. This renders such aggression as we have spoken of, impossible on the part of dissenting ministers; the voluntary principle cannot, in this case, be so “superstitiously abused, or unworthily stimulated.” This is an advantage in their position—an advantage which they enjoy under shelter of our establishment.

If it be asked again, why do not popish priests obtain an influence and amass a wealth dangerous to the liberty of the state? the answer is, they do, and will, and must, unless restrained by law. This

tion; also, the careless and unthinking, who only snatch at religion on their deathbeds.

“ Now, even if we admit that the dissenters are mostly of the first class, and that there neither is, nor is likely to arise, any risk of *their* falling much into the hands of their priesthood, still that does not destroy the force of the argument, which looks upon society as *a whole*.

“ Men would be always passing, or rather *families* would be always passing, out of one class into another. But, as what the church gained would be *for ever* lost to the laity; while what the laity kept would be kept only *for a time*; the result would, after all, be, that, in the end, the church would obtain ‘ every foot of land in the kingdom.’ ”

sufficiently accounts for the zeal of Romanists in agitating in favour of the voluntary system.

The Established Church interposes the only hindrance in their way, no longer sufficient in Ireland—whether it be still sufficient in England, judge ye—to keep them back from such an acquisition of power, as would endanger the independence of the government.

Legal restraints are indispensable—not for the purpose of propagating Christianity, as has been ignorantly asserted, and superciliously and vauntingly condemned—(this is a favourite “man of straw” with the eloquent advocates of voluntaryism)—but for the purpose of guarding civil liberty against the systematic encroachments of the papal power. That great ecclesiastical usurpation is not content to be subject to the civil ruler. The language of St. Peter is, that the king is supreme. On the contrary, the language of his successor!—authoritative and still unrescinded—is, “*Imperatores debent Pontificibus subesse, non præesse.*” Usurpation of authority is the darling design of every unrenewed heart. The especial characteristic of that climax of human pride, Babylon the Great, is usurpation of authority to such an extent as leaves no room for a rival. The language of her assumption is identical with the language of Jehovah’s sovereignty, I AM, and there is none beside me! Of course, in every kingdom where her adherents are numerous, and the prince does not belong to her; she excites jealousy in the ruler, because her claim is an in-

centive to rebellion in the state. There can be no real tranquillity, except in either her supremacy which leaves her to opposition, or her hopelessness which leaves her no opportunity.

In this consists the essential difference between the christian church and the papal power, in their bearing upon the affairs of the state. This seems to be forgotten by our statesmen in their inquiries into the causes of Ireland's disaffection. And yet this is the very core of the complaint. And this is a disease for which no human laws can work a direct remedy. In vain shall coercion attempt to reform. (How often must we repeat, that we advocate legislative restraints, not for the propagation of divine truth, but for the preservation of civil liberty?) In vain shall conciliation attempt to attach. Attachment to true liberty, civil and religious, and attachment to the papal system, are incompatible. Nothing can attach a man, in any degree, to the free constitution of England, which does not in the same degree detach him from the tyranny of the court of Rome.

This is what no laws of men can do by any direct process. It can be done only by means of the Gospel of the grace of God. There is a power in the Gospel, the power of divine truth appealing, in the gentle but omnipotent breathings of the Holy Spirit, to the conscience and affections of man, to awaken the conscience, to win the affections, to burst the strongest bonds of ignorance, or prejudice, or enmity. The proclamation from the King of peace, in the preaching of Jesus Christ, which emancipated England

and Scotland, and Germany and Holland; has power to keep them free, and to emancipate Ireland also; if only made with the faithfulness, the zeal, the courage, the perseverance, which characterized its living and dying advocates, its preaching, praying, bleeding, burning witnesses in the fifteenth century. Ireland is the “burdensome stone,” the master embarrassment of English statesmen: and it is not by penal statutes, neither is it by papal encouragements, neither is it by infidel compromises, that a remedy can be applied. No, but by reforming preachers, by missionary bishops, priests, and deacons, carrying to the ears of the people in their own tongue the glad tidings of salvation full and free, without the penances of man, or the intercessions of saints, or the fabled purifications of purgatory, or the charges for their application to the living and the dead. This is the process, the only effectual process, for the attainment of eventual tranquillity and liberty in Ireland, as an integral portion of the British empire: yet upon this it has unhappily become fashionable with our leading statesmen of all parties to look down with ill-dissembled scorn. The process which is commanded of God, which is powerfully recommended by the successful precedent of Great Britain, and which is strenuously inculcated by our national church seems never to arrest attention, unless it be in a passing sneer at the insane or insulting advocates of a new reformation, or, as it is slightly, and I am bold to add, ignorantly called, an officious proselytism.

But to return: An alliance of some sort, then, is inevitable; and that it may be one of mutual independence in some respects, it must be one of carefully regulated and mutually recognised dependence in others.

The adjustment is naturally a matter of great difficulty, and has led, as we all too painfully know, to centuries of struggling contention. In most of those struggles, the influence of the clergy has prevailed, and the civil governments of Europe have retained as much of undisputed independence as the head of the clergy, the vicar of Christ, (who is King of kings,) has seen it politic to concede to them. A prince, refractory in anything beyond the prescribed limits, revives the *exhibition* of this struggle. Neither is this a tale of the times of old, but a modern reality, as the present position of the king of Prussia, relatively with the pope, testifies. Never has arrangement been so successfully made as in our own country, where the clergy were deprived of all power of reference to a foreign bishop, and so connected with the government of their native land, as to secure a measure of good understanding and good order, such as Christendom had never seen before, and probably never will see again, should our national arrangement be broken up.

Observe its scriptural bearings. The apostles, as we have seen, enjoin submission—conscientious, religious submission, for the Lord's sake,—to every ordinance of man, whether it be to the king as supreme, or to governors as unto them that are sent

by him. This command is given to the christian clergy, to whom other commandments also are given by the same divine authority.

It is their duty to obey *all* their Lord's will. One part of that will is, that they should preach the word, and administer the sacraments, and fill up their own numbers, appointing fresh members to their order. Call this their *ecclesiastical* duty. For the performance of this they must retain (so far as their own act is concerned) perfect liberty. They can consent to no interference.

Another part of their Lord's will is, that they should be, and continue, *subject* to the civil power. Call this their *political* duty. Experience has shown that they are not to be trusted for the performance of this duty ; that, left to themselves, the temptations of their position in the world, and influence over men, are more than they can bear. They have abused them, and would again, to an aggrandisement in wealth and temporal power, (relatively with the state,) which is forbidden them in the Scripture, as incompatible with their political duty. Is it not wise, then, in them to take security of themselves against their known infirmity, by entering into an arrangement which shall prevent the recurrence of such ambitious aggrandisement, if only that arrangement be such as not to infringe upon their ecclesiastical liberty ; and still more, if that arrangement be such as supplies increased facilities for the more enlarged performance of their ecclesiastical duties ? They have inalienable func-

tions, over which they must watch with jealousy, and suffer no interference. They have conscious infirmities, against which they are bound to avail themselves of every lawful guard. If they can enter into such an arrangement with the civil power, as will keep them in their place of subjection politically, and leave them wholly unrestricted ecclesiastically, they have all their desire for the attainment of as much purity combined with as much usefulness as can be hoped for in this dispensation. To accomplish this, the terms of the arrangement must keep their ecclesiastical acts entirely in their own hands ; while the opportunities afforded for the exercise of those acts, whether territorial allotment or endowment, or both, may be left entirely in the hands of the civil power, in any of its denominations,—the crown, an inferior officer of the state, or a private owner.

Let it be the Church's care to ordain all the ministers who are required : this is an ecclesiastical and inalienable function. Let it be her care also to ordain none but those who are qualified and competent rightly and duly to fill the sacred office : this is a scriptural duty, lay hands suddenly on no man—then, she may not only allow, but be obliged to, any layman to give territorial opportunity, or pecuniary support, or both, to any of her ministers.

Thus, ordination and patronage being kept entirely distinct, the arrangement would be simplified if the whole patronage of the kingdom were in the crown, as the whole ordination for the kingdom

is with the bishop. The crown must come to the bishop for ecclesiastical men to appoint, and the bishop ought to be able to defy the crown to find any improper, or unsuitable, or incompetent men in holy orders.

If interference in ordination be claimed by the crown, the church must resist the claim, and stand aloof from all alliance, rather than submit. In that case, the independence of the state is in jeopardy. She cannot get rid of the church. There it is, identified personally with nearly the whole of her population, and she has no check upon it. Her subjects have consciences, and anticipations of eternity, as well as property and temporal influence; and they are liable to be misled into such an engrossing allegiance to the bishop as shall exalt him above, instead of leaving him, as he ought to be, subject to the secular power.

If the patronage, as well as the ordination, of the kingdom, were universally in the hands of the bishop, again supremacy would be the temptation of the church, and the independence of the state would be endangered. A *portion* of patronage might indeed be vested in the bishop without risk, because the nature of the risk on that side is from *excess in degree* of influence, not from the violation of any principle. But no portion, however small, of interference in ordination can be given to the crown, without the immediate violation of a fundamental principle.

The *measure* of patronage which it would be safe

to entrust to the bishop, it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to define : but supposing the church to appoint her own bishops, and the bishops to be true and faithful, and competent, in the exercise of their high functions, as the sole introducers of ministers into the church ; there would be no risk, if the entire patronage of the kingdom were vested in the civil power.

The right of determining which of her presbyters shall from time to time be made her bishops, is a right which the church may cede to the crown, without compromising any ecclesiastical function. The crown is limited, in the choice, to those whom the church has already prepared and pronounced competent. But in compensation for this lawful surrender of privilege, the church may fairly claim a measure of patronage.

Thus we stand now. Ordination and patronage are completely distinct, even when they are in the hands of the same individual—the bishop. The church alone, and without any interference or restriction whatsoever, ordains. The crown, certain officers of state, and private proprietors, have patronage. The church has practically ceded to the crown the privilege of selecting out of her presbyters who shall be bishops ; and the crown has ceded to the church a larger measure of patronage to secular advantages.

It is worthy of serious consideration how far the present painful position of affairs in the Church of Scotland may be traced to the connexion subsisting

in that country between patronage and ordination. The nominee of the patron being only a probationer, and not yet a presbyter, and it being necessary that he should be made a presbyter before he can take possession of the benefice ; *patronage involves an order to ordain.* If this order be obeyed, the ecclesiastical functions of the church are invaded and overborne by a secular authority : if it be not obeyed, the secular rights of the patron are resisted and kept in abeyance by the faithfulness of the church. Such a state of things evidently contains the elements of collision, upon the slightest misunderstanding ; and that, without taking into account the additional element of the popular choice, which may be on the side of the patron, thus in a manner compelling the church to ordain ; or it may be against the nominee, and thus apparently justify the church in resisting the patron.

In the Church of England all these liabilities to collision are avoided. The nominee must already be a presbyter. The matter of ordination is finished, before the matter of patronage begins ; and thus both the ecclesiastical functions of the church, and the secular rights of the patron, are uninvasion.

These are some of the requisites for a wisely regulated scriptural arrangement. But these are not all. It is further necessary that there should be a defined and mutually recognised code of laws on either side.

It is no usurpation in civil things on the part of the church, to require from the state the enactment of

laws whose *known* obligations, and prohibitions, and sanctions, shall exclude all the impromptu and irregular movements of caprice. Such laws, defined, written, and published, supply the only true safeguard against tyranny. Where there is no defined code, there is an open door for oppression on the one side, and there must ever be perplexity and apprehension, degenerating into slavery, upon the other. Some unwritten rule, hitherto not mutually recognised, but now pleaded as of authority, may be got up, at any convenient season, to serve the ambition of the prince, and give a colourable pretext for the slavery of his people. Consequently, a state which refuses a defined code of laws, may be justly accused of, at the best, compassing tyranny.

In like manner, it is no usurpation in spiritual things, on the part of the state, to require from the church a defined, written, and published code of doctrines, and ordinances, and discipline, such as shall exclude all liability to surprise, and consequent opposition, arising from any impromptu and irregular movements of caprice. Without this, there can be no real liberty. If the church be unpledged, she may, at her varying convenience, advance anything, however intolerant. If she be but partially pledged, then, in what remains undefined, a door is till kept open for the exercise of tyranny. Thus a defined code of laws on the one side, and a defined formulary of doctrines and discipline on the other, are indispensable towards a well-regulated union for safety and liberty.

In this you see the true answer to the charge so frequently brought against us by dissenters, that the state fixes our creed, and that we cannot change an article of our creed but by act of parliament. Our creed is fixed, not by the state, but by the Bible. There we find it, and present it in intelligible formulas to the civil ruler. He may disapprove of it, and refuse to enter into any alliance with us. This he does at his own risk. And as to the charge that we cannot change an article of our creed, it is our glory that our creed is unchangeable.² It is the one, the ancient, the true, the divine creed, which

² Our readers will now duly appreciate the representations of Dr. Wardlaw, when he speaks of "a community placing over themselves a governor, one of whose official prerogatives it shall be to *dictate to them their religion!* (the italics and note of admiration are the doctor's, not mine,) to determine for them what principles they shall hold, and what observances they shall follow, in the worship of their Maker."

And again, when he talks of "that insufferable outrage on the reason and common sense of mankind—that all but infinite absurdity—the investiture of the civil magistrate with the prerogative of authoritatively choosing a religion for his people!" this may be fine writing, and the argument, or rather the assertions contained in it, may, for any thing I know to the contrary, have some application to the state of things in China; but to use it with reference to the state of things in England, (where the scriptural doctrines and primitive observances of the christian church, though happily *adopted* by the civil magistrate, were never, in the smallest item, *dictated* by him to the priesthood,) does certainly betray, in so powerful and well-stored a mind as that of Dr. Wardlaw, a very gratifying lack of objections which really apply to our case.

no man can change, which no christian man can consent to change. The statute book of the state, however, is perpetually changing in many things, and it becomes a wise and really enlightened legislature to take especial heed that none of those changes shall so affect the inalienable functions of the clergy, (their direct duty to the Lord Jesus Christ,) as to compel a separation between them and the government. As legislators the clergy are helpless, but the inevitable consequences of aggression upon them in this respect, are such as no prudent statesman, really desiring the peace of his country, will willingly encounter.

Thus the only terms of union, which are at once efficient in themselves, and scriptural in their application, exclude any and every society calling itself a christian church, but refusing to pledge itself to a written standard, or maintaining, in addition to a written standard, some further and undefined rule of faith or practice. The dissenter, therefore, who rejects the primitive formulary, and the papist who adds to it, tradition written and *unwritten*, (*unwritten!* there is an open door,) stand equally excluded from safe union with the state ; and when we consider the necessity which the nature of the case imposes for some sort of union, as a guard against the inevitable working of priestly avarice and ambition ; we have cause to give God humble and hearty thanks for our scripturally discriminating and liberty-protecting establishment.³

³ The following extract from a letter addressed by a "Mem-

ber of the Church of Scotland " to a zealous advocate of the voluntary system, contains a practical appeal, worthy of the serious consideration of our opponents.

" You laid down the general proposition, that a church cannot enter into alliance with a state, without resigning her independence ; that is, if a state engage to afford support to a church on condition that the church render certain services in return, the latter party *necessarily* gives up her independence. I pretend not to give your language, but I am confident that this is the proposition which you laboured to establish.

" I was prepared to hear you affirm, that in such contracts the church is strongly tempted to resign, in a greater or less degree, her independence—that in time past she had generally done so—and that in future she would most probably continue to do so ; but when you maintained that she *must do so*, and that the contrary is impossible, I listened with some astonishment, and felt very anxious to hear the grounds on which you considered such an unqualified statement to rest.

" These grounds were, first, that before a contract can be formed, a state must sit in judgment upon the doctrines and general merits of a church ; and, second, that after a contract has been formed, the church can make no alterations upon her creed or administration, without consulting the state, or else breaking up the contract.

" Now, I hesitate not to say, that if your proposition stands upon no other grounds than these, it is totally baseless. If submitting to these be a renouncing of independence, then there is not, and cannot be, such a thing as independence enjoyed in society by any man, or body of men, either in things civil or in things sacred, for all are bound by contracts, expressed or understood ; and the two terms in question are the very terms upon which every contract is founded. Therefore, in forming a state alliance on these terms, a church does nothing more than is done in civil affairs, by every master and servant, every magistrate and subject, every company of merchants, every member of every association, every union of two or more societies, and every nation that allies itself to another nation, or in religious

affairs by every member of a church, every minister and office-bearer in a church, every missionary or teacher supported by a church, every congregation, and every union of congregations.

“ When a master and servant form an engagement, each proposes terms, and each judges of the terms offered by the other. If, after engaging, one party wish to depart from the original terms, he must give the other party notice. If no objection is made, the connexion may continue ; if otherwise, it must cease. Is there any giving up of independence here ?

“ When a person enters a society, he consents to its regulations. Does he give up his independence when he enters, because, if he become seriously dissatisfied with the regulations, he must either obtain an alteration of them, or leave the society ?

“ Does a foreigner give up his independence, when he comes to live in Britain, because he comes under an understood engagement to obey our laws, though he is, at the same time, quite at liberty to depart when he cannot yield obedience ?

“ Should a society of agriculturists and a society of mathematicians agree to co-operate in parcelling out, and bringing under cultivation, a district in New South Wales—the proper department of each society being specified, and a mutual stipulation made that neither should interfere with the department of the other, upon the penalty of a disunion—could either of these societies be charged with a sacrifice of independence ?

“ Before two nations form an alliance, each considers and sits in judgment upon the terms of the other ; and if, after forming it, one should wish to alter the terms, it must consult the other, or endanger a disunion.

“ Do not cases of an ecclesiastical nature stand on precisely the same footing ? When a man becomes a member of a church, he agrees to its leading doctrines and rules. If afterwards his opinions change so much that he cannot conscientiously remain a member, he can withdraw. Did he resign his independence when he became a member ?

“ You are minister of a respectable congregation, and you have entered into a contract with your people, which, according

to your own reasoning, must have annihilated your independence; because, first, you submitted your qualifications to their judgment before you were chosen in preference to others; and, second, you cannot change your views of christian doctrine, without either consulting your people and carrying them with you, or dissolving your connexion with them. Yet these are the precise terms, by submitting to which you declare that the church renounces her independence!

“If a congregation privately formed should desire connexion with your Synod, it would require to submit to the first of the terms in question, before it could be received; and if it fell into doctrinal error, it would quickly be made to feel the force of the second. Does it then forfeit independence by forming such a connexion?

“Nor does it alter the case, whether the contracting parties are both ecclesiastical, or the one ecclesiastical and the other secular. Allow that your presbytery send six missionaries to Jamaica, stipulating that, while they teach certain doctrines and agree to certain other terms, they will be recognised by the presbytery; and allow that three planters agree upon the same terms to afford them support. In the one of these contracts both parties are ecclesiastical—in the other, one of them is secular. Well; if the missionaries depart from the specified terms, the presbytery may withdraw their countenance, and the planters their support. Therefore, according to your views, the missionaries would sacrifice their independence, if they formed such a contract either with the presbytery or with the planters!

“You spoke with much complacency of the independence possessed by voluntary churches; but I really cannot see how, on *your principles*, there can be a voluntary church in the kingdom independent. I hold that there is a contract between the state of every society, civil or religious, within its territories—a contract between the state and voluntary churches, in words to this effect—‘We may not enter upon the domain of Cæsar, and Cæsar may not interfere with the things of God.’ This is a contract, tacit indeed, but as obvious as if sanctioned by a hundred acts of Synod and Parliament, and it is attended with both of the

conditions which you suppose to be subversive of independence. It is only on condition that they interfere not with the state, that the state interfere not with them ; and when it finds them departing from these terms, it will place itself in a new position respecting them. It is clear, therefore, that no church, and no institution, civil, literary, scientific, or religious, is independent upon your principle.

" If there is no sacrifice of independence in the cases I have adduced, then it follows that a church contracting with a state for support in lieu of service—but neither assuming authority over the state in civil affairs, nor allowing the state to assume authority over her spiritual affairs—does not relinquish her independence. She lays her doctrine and government before the state for consideration, because it has a right to be satisfied as to her fitness for the end proposed ; and if she find occasion to alter her terms, it remains with the state to decide whether it will agree to the alteration, or dissolve the compact. And what is here more than in all the cases I have specified ? "

Upon the concluding sentence of this, I would observe, that as regards her *doctrine*, the christian church can never " find occasion to alter her terms ; " though, by alterations in the statute book, she may be compelled to " dissolve her compact."

LECTURE IV.

CONNEXION WITH THE STATE — POLITICAL SOCIETY AN ORDINANCE OF GOD; THE SOVEREIGN, A CREATURE—THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AN ORDINANCE OF GOD; THE BISHOP, A SUBJECT — THE BIBLE, A COMMON STANDARD FOR BOTH—INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCE OF A DISREGARD OF THAT STANDARD BY EITHER—SCRIPTURAL DUTY OF THE CIVIL RULER—THE REITERATED ASSERTION OF DISSENTERS, THAT THE SCRIPTURE NOWHERE COUNTENANCES COMPULSORY PAYMENTS FOR RELIGIOUS SERVICES, ANSWERED FROM SCRIPTURE—NO COERCION OF A DISSENTER'S CONSCIENCE INVOLVED—FURTHER EXCELLENCE OF OUR ECCLESIASTICAL INSTRUMENTALITY IN MATTERS WHERE SCRIPTURE DOES NOT PRESCRIBE—ARTICLE XXXIV.—TRADITION, IF NOT COMPLETELY SUBJECT TO, WILL EFFECTUALLY MAKE VOID, THE WORD OF GOD.

WE were investigating the right connexion which should subsist between the scriptural exercise of ecclesiastical functions by the christian church, and the scriptural position of supreme authority, occupied, and always to be retained, by the civil power.

Contemplating the members of the church, as also members of civil society ; and considering the executive, or ministry of the church, in their inevit-

able influence over men ; I showed it to be indispensable for the safety of the civil ruler's independent and supreme authority ; that he should institute and maintain a connexion between himself and the priesthood—a connexion at once cherishing and subordinating, endowing and restraining—a connexion which a *christian* priesthood should cordially desire both ways—as supplying increased facilities for their usefulness ; and as a defence against their liability, covetously and ambitiously to abuse their inevitable influence : and therein as a valuable assistance to them, in doing what God has commanded them to do—make disciples of *nations*, and in remaining where God has commanded them to remain, *subject* to the civil power.

The strength of this argument is derived from the deep workings of the human heart ; for the force of which our appeal is to every man's conscience in the sight of God. It would, however, be a gross and wilful misrepresentation to allege that our case rests wholly upon this argument, strong as it is. On the contrary, this argument is rather collateral, and, so far as I know, novel, in the controversy. But having thus appealed to the *political safety* of the civil ruler, we now advance more directly to appeal to his *scriptural duty*. And here, as elsewhere, we shall find cause to admire and adore the merciful combination of our heavenly Father ; who has graciously identified the path of safety with the path of duty ; so constituting it the only path of happiness. That connexion with the

christian church, which we have shown, from the nature of things, to be the ruler's safety, we proceed now to show, from the word of God, to be the ruler's duty.

Political society (whatever aspect of government may be worn by "the powers that be") is an ordinance of God. "By HIM kings reign." We are not now arguing against those who deny this, and therefore it is not necessary to advert to those second causes, through the agencies of which, God is pleased to advance sovereigns or governments to their high station: nor to point out, whatever the second cause may be, whether the suffrages of the people received in successive elections, or the right of primogeniture according to an acknowledged law; that still the origin of the power is from God, and the obligation to obedience proceeds only secondarily from the act of man; the wildest popular revolutions form no exception to this *quasi* (to use the language of Milton) *vero Deus non ita regat populum, ut cui vult Deus, regnum tradat populus.*

The powers that be, then, of whatever complexion, "are ordained of God," and their supremacy is still subordinate to His revealed will. The civil ruler is himself a *creature*; an impotent creature, whose life, equally with the life of the meanest of his subjects, is at the mere sovereign mercy of the Creator, and whose wisdom it is to know and remember that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will; a re-

sponsible creature, whose real happiness, both now and for ever, is inseparable from the conscientious discharge of those duties which are involved in the station to which he is advanced, and the opportunities by which he is surrounded; a delegated creature, himself under authority, while others are under him.

His right to rule, and his duty to obey, are derived from one and the same source. If the one be disregarded, so may the other. If he refuse to obey God, he arraigns his own charter, the only charter by virtue of which he can claim, upon any better plea than brute force, or accidental majority, to rule over men.

The christian church is an ordinance of God, for the teaching of his will to all men. She is a witness for Christ, concerning whom God the Father says, This is my beloved Son, hear him. She is a keeper and teacher of holy Scripture, wherein alone the will of God is declared with infallible certainty.

A christian state rules by the agency of its appointed officers, supreme and delegated. These, in subordination to God, wield the sword and the treasury, for the “punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.” To these, so subordinate, the body of the community consent to be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

A christian church teaches by the agency of its appointed officers, supreme and delegated, bishops and presbyters. These, in subordination to the revealed will of God, (i. e. holy scripture,) propagate religious truth, and inculcate social and personal

duties. And by these, so subordinate, the body of the church consent to be directed.

The social duties, so inculcated by the priesthood, include their own, and exhibit them as interdicted from the exercise of civil supremacy. *Be subject to the king as supreme*, is a divine commandment, from obedience to which the christian priesthood can claim no exemption. The combination of the royal and sacerdotal offices in the same person, that is, the perfected union of church and state, is reserved for the Lord Jesus Christ himself, when that sure word of prophecy shall be fulfilled, which announces him as a Priest upon his throne. For any bishop to attempt the combination, in the mean time, to forsake his scriptural position of subjection to the civil ruler, and add civil supremacy to his priestly office; would be to proclaim himself an usurper and an antichrist.

Thus the executive of the state is supreme in *civil rule*, with a recognised subordination to the revealed will of God, in which will it is the peculiar office of the executive of the church to instruct them. And the executive of the church is supreme in *religious teaching*, with a recognised subordination to the revealed will of God, in which it is the christian duty of the executive of the state to be instructed. In this way, they become mutually helpful of each other, and continue mutually a check upon each other, by a mutual reference to a common standard, which is supreme over both. The evidence for the divine origin of that standard, whether

external and historical, or internal and experimental, is equally open to the examination of both.

Negligence of that standard involves, in due course, its own inevitable retribution. If the executive of the state neglect it, and rule without due deference to God's commandments, the body of the community becomes divided. Some hold with the irreligious rulers, and some with the supreme standard by which those rulers are condemned. The rulers, in such a case, will of course endeavour to cause the executive of the church to lower the national standard, in order that their own apostasy may not appear so flagrant. As men are constituted, this will always succeed in a measure, and lead to a corresponding measure of division in the church also. Part of the laity hold with the compromisers, and part with the divine standard by which those compromisers are condemned. Hence party spirit, and party contests, with all their grievous consequences in both church and state.

If the executive of the church commence the neglect, and teach false doctrine and defective or erroneous practice, similar consequences must ensue. The members of the church are divided. Some hold with the false teachers, some with the faithful standard (the Bible) by which those teachers are condemned. In the controversy thus occasioned, the false teachers (supposing them to be in stations of influence and rank) will always succeed, in some degree at least, in prevailing upon the executive of the state to be upon their side. This leads to *ex-*

parte measures, and thereby provokes and foments division; a part of the community holding with the existing executive in church and state; and a part reverting to the unchanging and infallible standard, by which the proceedings of that executive are condemned. Hence confusion, and where confusion is there is every evil work. There is no prevention of confusion in the outset, but by a mutual adherence to the supreme standard, the revealed will of God; and there is no recovery from confusion incurred, but by a vigorous and determined recurrence (at any present risk) to that standard.

The important question then presents itself in all its force, what is the scriptural duty of the civil magistrate? Dr. Wardlaw has put and answered the question thus: "What is the magistrate's province in regard to religion? His true and legitimate province is, to have *no province at all*." Yet strangely enough, the Doctor adds, "*As a man*, he is bound to believe the truths, and obey the precepts, of the word of God; *as a magistrate*, he is bound to fulfil all his official functions on christian principles, from christian motives, and according to christian precepts, as every man is, in every condition and every relation of life; but *authority* in religion he has none."¹ Upon this I ask, how the performance of his *official functions*, as a magistrate, is to be separated from his *authority*? And if his official functions, thus inseparable from his authority, (which is, in fact, the meaning of official,) are to be

¹ Lectures, p. 191.

performed according to christian precepts ; how is his official authority to be kept separate from his Christianity ?

It is admitted that civil rulers, as such, have official functions ; that, being providentially placed in a peculiar position, they owe a correspondingly peculiar duty to Almighty God, the great ruler of all. This is of the utmost importance, because it belongs to the very root of the question before us, to classify duties. There are duties which belong to men, *as men*. These are common to all, and equally binding upon every man, whatever may be his condition or relation in life. They apply to him, not because he is a father or a son, not because he is a master or a servant, a ruler or a subject ; but simply, and absolutely, and universally, because he is *a man*: such are the duties of *honesty*, and *truth*, and *temperance*. This is the first class of duties ; but it would be to outrage the simplest dictates of common sense, as well as the plainest declarations of holy Scripture, to assert that it includes *all* our duties. There is a second class of duties, which are not equally binding upon all men ; but to be distributed among men, some to one, some to another, according to their relations in life and positions in society. This will be simplified by an instance. Take the instance of a servant : he is equally with his master under the first class of duties, as a man. It is his duty, as it is his master's duty, to be *honest*, and *true*, and *sober* ; but he is not equally with his master under the second class of duties. It is not his duty, as it is

his master's, to *rule the household*, to *provide supplies*, and to *pay wages*. Every station, then, has its peculiar duties, superadded to those general duties which belong to man as man. Now, by every fair consequence of legitimate argument, this applies to civil rulers. Their duty is not to be confined to the first class which belongs to them as *men*; they have, in addition thereto, those peculiar and distinguishing duties which belong to them as *rulers*. In other words, they have personal and official duties, and they are responsible to Almighty God for the due discharge of both.

The Apostle Peter has supplied us with a general description of that official function which, under God, belongs to rulers *as such*: “the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well.”

From this, as a scriptural starting point, it follows, that, in order to be good governors, men ought to know what *is good*, and what *is evil*. If they be uninformed upon this point; if they be mistaken; if they be such as the prophet describes, men who call evil good, and good evil, then they may, perhaps, make and execute laws which shall bring punishment upon the good, and praise on the evil doers. A right standard of good and evil is therefore an indispensable requisite in a good ruler. But where can such a standard be found? This should be the first inquiry with every conscientious statesman. No man can be duly qualified to give a rational opinion or record a judicious vote, upon any measure, without having a regulating standard by which to

judge and act. The will of Almighty God, the Creator and Preserver of all men, is the only infallible standard. If this be not made known to men, they are left adrift without chart, or compass, or helm. Right and wrong, good and evil, are terms of varying opinion and convenient accommodation, rather than of fixed principle. Witness the infamously cruel, and debasingly indecent practices which are consecrated as right, and good, and religious in all heathen states! If the will of God *be* made known unto men, then every statesman is bound to consult it, for his standard of good and evil. There he will read, that “a man’s life consisteth not of the abundance of the things that he possesseth,” and so he will learn that temporal prosperity is not the chief good. Nay, more, he will read that a man who is rich in this world, and poor towards God, is a fool; and so he will learn, that to consider this world chiefly, is evil and not good. This bears at once upon his duty as a ruler, because, as government is for the punishment of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well, he will find himself called upon to resist those who would confine his duty as a ruler to temporal concerns; I say to resist such as evil, and to encourage as good those who plead for the paramount importance of training and instruction for eternity. If rulers, in defiance of all this, will speak, act, legislate, and govern, as if this present world (with its prosperities, possessions, and enjoyments, and without any training and instruction for eternity,) were men’s chief good; they

do all they can to pervert the right object of government, and to mislead the country as to the nature of what is right. Because it is undeniable that whatever the government of a country makes its chief aim, it teaches the people of the country to regard as their chief good. If government make secular instruction their chief aim in national education for example; to the comparative disparagement and neglect, from whatever cause, of religious teaching in the spiritual doctrines of Christianity, they do all in their power to make the country set a supreme value upon secular institutions, and despise Christianity as of secondary importance. Further still, the true and final obligation of a law consists in its conformity to the principles of essential justice—that is, to the will and law of God. The mere will of a man, or body of men, does not constitute a finally binding authority. No combination of men can make that right which God forbids, or that wrong which God commends. No legislature, for example, on the face of the earth, by any majority of votes, or even by unanimity of decision, could make it right *to bow down to an image*, or wrong to *search the Scriptures*.

When rulers reject the law of God as their standard, they involve the abrogation of their own true and righteous authority. The only standard then left to them is the varying judgment of a majority of men. The foundations of the social edifice are then endangered, because, in a time of excitement, a majority of men may be induced to clamour in

the name of justice for what is really unjust ; for what could be irresistibly shown to be unjust, if the law of God were the acknowledged standard, but against which, for want of such a standard, there is no force of argument, no ground of resistance. Without this high standard of reference, for the inherent and everlasting righteousness of the laws, legislation cannot retain its strong hold upon the *consciences* of men. The statute book and the judicial bench are divested of all sacredness of respect and finality of controversy ; and their matured enactments and grave decisions are arraigned with as little scruple, and canvassed with as reckless a freedom, as the jejune speculations of any private individual theorist. Thus there ceases to be real stability in the nation, because the rulers have ceased to refer their measures and principles of government to the law of God ; and thus we devoutly trace in practical operation the invincible and retributive majesty of Him who says, “ Them that honour me will I honour, and they who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”

It is of the utmost consequence that the question be fairly discussed on these high grounds. The aching anxieties of thoughtful men (and none but such can be influential men) can never be satisfied, neither can their best energies ever be practically evoked, by arguments or considerations which rise no higher than statistical comparisons, and practical utility.

Let our opponents then fairly meet our high prin-

ciple of universal duty to God in every creature, varying in its peculiar features and special calls with the providential position of each individual, and let them tell us the *whole scriptural duty of a christian king*. Let Dr. Wardlaw define official functions, and explain what he means by their performance according to christian *precepts*, as well as from christian motives. The principle for which we contend is well understood, and diligently acted upon by our opponents in this question, when, in the prosecution of their own plans, the duty of contributing towards the erection of a chapel, and of *influencing* others to do so likewise, is inculcated upon opulent and influential men.

What, then, let me ask, becomes the duty of a man who finds himself, by the grace of God, a Christian, and, in the providence of God, a king? His providential position invests him with a commanding *influence*: is he, then, to confine his exertions on behalf of God's church to what he can do as a detached and private individual, apart from his official influence? Upon what new principle is it that he is to be an exception to the general rule, and hide under a bushel the precious talent of royal influence with which God has entrusted him?

The only way in which a rejection of the principle of church establishments could be made good, would be by showing that it is impossible for a king to be a converted man. If it can be proved that no king can be a Christian,—that Christ's church must, to the end of the dispensation, be confined to the

class of persons who composed it in its infancy, and that all kings and governments must continue pagan,—then, I acknowledge, it would follow that no kingdom can have a national establishment of religion. But only let it be granted that rulers may be Christians, and then, let any man, with the Bible in his hand, fairly and comprehensively meet the question, *what is the scriptural duty of a christian king?*

But our cause is so good, under every aspect, that we can afford to descend from this eminence, and argue the question on the more popular ground of utility.

Looking, then, practically at the benefit, social and relative, of the nation, *considered as a whole*, we allege that the national church is productive of more benefit than any other, nay, than every other institution in the land. It contributes more to the peace and safety, the morality and happiness of the community, than the army, more than the navy, more than all the courts of law, more than the magistracy, more than the police. The officers of human justice restrain the outward enormities of those members of the community who are not influenced, who cannot be reached, by the church ; but the church preserves the *great bulk* of the community from giving the magistracy any trouble at all. If the church were extended as it ought to be by the government, and energetic as it ought to be in itself, there would be very little occasion for policemen. One true-hearted clergyman, preaching the

gospel of the grace of God, visiting the sick, and organising the schools, prevents more crimes than a hundred of the most active policemen in the kingdom. And not only so: the effects produced by such a clergyman are not confined (as those of the magistrate are to the punishment of crime committed, or at the best) to the *prevention of crime*; they extend to the production of morality, to the communication of happiness, and to the sending forth into society a number, a constantly increasing number, of unpaid peace-makers. If, then, it be the acknowledged duty of the government, for the benefit of the nation, to maintain, at the public expense, an armed force—if it be their duty to maintain judges and courts of law—if it be their duty to maintain a numerous, organised, and wide-spreading system of police; upon what principle shall it be denied, that it is equally, nay, more imperatively, their duty to maintain and extend a national scriptural church?

Here we are met by the sweeping assertion, that all such establishments for religious purposes are anti-scriptural. If this be so indeed, I am willing to grant most freely, that no amount of demonstrated usefulness can justify their continuance, much less their extension. But is this so?

It is the frequently reiterated assertion of dissenters, that the scriptures supply no warrant whatever for any compulsory exactions by the civil ruler of a state in support of the ministers or services of religion. This, they allege, should be left entirely,

to the voluntary contributions of the people. In vindication of this, they earnestly and eloquently expatiate upon the power of the gospel to produce grateful love, with all its self-denying labours.

It may serve to simplify our points of difference, to state that in all such amplifications on the practical power of genuine Christianity, we cordially agree. No consistent churchman denies the existence or the efficacy of the voluntary principle in the hearts of truly converted persons—in the members of the church mystical. If these could be separated from the community, and gathered into congregations by themselves ; if these alone were to be provided for ; if only so many ministers and churches were required as would be sufficient for these ; then we are willing to concede that the voluntary principle might be sufficient. Nay, more, we may freely grant, that in addition to an absolute sufficiency for these, it would supply a small surplus for a missionary effort at expansion. This is precisely the dissenters' system. Their language is this, and such as this—

“The support of the gospel ministry is a religious duty ; so it can only be truly and acceptably performed, when it is the voluntary expression of these principles and dispositions which the gospel creates and cherishes.”

“Consider too the object of the gospel, as it regards believers. All who give evidence of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, are required to associate themselves

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in a holy fellowship in their several localities. These communities constitute the churches of Christ, in distinction from the impenitent—the world. To these bodies the directions of the New Testament, respecting their order and government, are addressed ; by them these directions must be obeyed ; to them belongs the ministry, with all the regulations which relate to it ; in their hands is the power of discipline, and on them is laid the duty of disseminating the gospel amongst the unconverted. In other words, all that concerns the form and government, and duties of the church, resides within the church itself. They are things with which the world, the openly impenitent and unbelieving, have no right to interfere : they are church matters, regulated by the law of Christ, and carried into effect by the members of his body, to the exclusion of the world. And is it not natural to expect, that the pecuniary arrangements, connected with the service of God, should be confined within the church too ? Would it not appear a monstrous anomaly, that while, in all that regarded its organisation and government, the church should exist separate from, and independent of, the world, it should, in regard to its pecuniary support, be placed within the power of the world, and in helpless dependence on the ungodly ? Such a thing, we may be well assured, cannot be. The conclusiveness of my argument exists irrespective of the particular form of government adopted. It applies to them all, and rests on

the scripturally recognised distinction between the church and the world, and on the admitted fact that the church, whatever form it may assume, has, by the authority of Christ, the entire means of management within itself. And in perfect accordance with this, the law of the New Testament on this subject has been framed."

"The pastor, with whom chiefly rests the preservation of purity, is furnished, from the way in which he is personally affected by it, with a strong inducement to watch over it with sedulous care. His support flowing from christian principle, and proportioned usually by the degree in which that principle exists in the church, makes it his interest, not less than his duty, to prevent the intrusion of unsuitable individuals. Whatever corrupts the church, endangers his comfort in this as well as in every other respect. For his own sake, therefore, he will take care that the church is not deteriorated and weakened by the accession of men of suspicious religious character. Besides what is thus personal, there is another powerful consideration operating in the same direction. The spiritual well-being of those over whom he is placed, must be to a considerable extent affected by the religious condition of the body to which they belong. When a high state of holy principle prevails, the benefit of each individual will be more effectually secured ; and, on the other hand, the admission of suspicious and ungodly men will inflict an injury of a most serious character, retard-

ing the growth, and placing stumbling blocks in the way of the sincere and devoted.”¹

We cannot confine our views to this class of persons. We recognise, indeed, the true christian believers here spoken of, and the vital principle of spiritual religion by which they are actuated, as *a part* of the truth, and we urge it as far as we can find a response to it. But we recognise as another part of the truth, a visible society, including multitudes who are not spiritual,—we recognise a commandment to baptize *nations*, to cast a net which encloses not good fish only, but bad also; to proclaim in the highways that the oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things ready, and gather to the wedding all, as many as we can find, both bad and good. We recognise, therefore, a demand for *outward means*, not upon a congregational scale only, but on a national scale. This is beyond the reach of the voluntary principle; and we are now to inquire whether any provision has been made for this in holy Scripture.

So long as only a few of the children and servants of a large family are religious, there can of course be no *authority* connected with their religious exercises or efforts; all that they do, in this way, must be either individual, or the result of a voluntary arrangement. But no sooner does the sacred influence reach the head of the family, than a new feature pervades the household—religious worship by authority, and this including many

¹ Sermon by the Rev. John Kelly.

particulars which the voluntary associators might never have thought of, and could never have accomplished, even had they desired it. In the process of christianising a nation, or at least baptizing, only let us reach the point of enrolling the sovereign among the baptized, and *there* we find the basis of a provision made for the extension of christian instrumentality by authority over the whole nation. I repeat, and must call attention to it, the extension of christian *instrumentality* by authority — who ever said, that the civil ruler should, or could, extend *religion* itself? Yet losing sight (I hope inadvertently) of the essential difference between outward instrumentality, and inward influences, the eloquent advocates of voluntaryism hold us up to the execration of all right-minded persons, as if we contended for the compulsion of man's *mind* by his fellow man. We contend for no such thing, but for the authoritative extension of those outward means, which God himself has appointed and promised to bless, that the whole population may be brought within range of the blessing.

We are not absurd enough to imagine that a legislative enactment could create in man *an ear for music*: but we do desire that by legislative authority, means should be obtained for causing the sweet sounds of redeeming love in Jesus Christ, to reach the outward ears of every man in the kingdom; if so be, he may receive, from God, a gracious taste within, for the heavenly harmony.

The civil ruler becomes a member of the church visible at least, perhaps also of the church mystical, and professes to find his duties described in the Bible. We will suppose him reading, first the New Testament. There he finds not only general principles and exhortations, but also the specific duties of various stations and conditions of men. Masters and servants, parents and children, husbands and wives, pastors and people—all have their distinct and separate portions. But there seems to be no such obvious and direct commandment pointing out in detail his duty *as a king*: and if he found nothing in the New Testament concerning the political duty of any class, he might be tempted to conclude (as many have hastily done) that Christianity applied only to personal and relative and domestic duties, and had no connexion with politics. But he does find political duty inculcated, and most plainly. He finds one apostle saying, “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers,” &c.; and another apostle saying, “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord’s sake,” &c.; and again, “Honour the king.”

It is, however, sufficiently remarkable that all these exhortations to the performance of political duties are on one side. They are all addressed to the subject, none of them to the sovereign. In every other instance, the exhortation is not only direct to those under authority, but also correlative to those exercising authority. Is a servant ad-

dressed and instructed in his duties of obedience ? So is his master addressed and instructed in his duty of rule. Is a child addressed ? So is his father. Is a wife addressed ? So is her husband. But here it is not so. Here a subject is addressed, and there is no corresponding address to his sovereign. Why is this ? Is a sovereign excluded from Christianity ? Is no direction given for his guidance ? Is God so far a respecter of persons ? His *office* is distinctly recognised in the directions given to his subjects ; is, then, his corresponding *duty* nowhere pointed out ?

He reads in the word of God, exhortations with which his providential station renders it impossible for him to comply. They are addressed to *subjects*. And is there no compensation ; no duty described which a subject cannot perform, but which belongs exclusively to the sovereign ? This is a perplexity, and a perplexity out of which a dissenting minister has no consistent mode of extricating a baptized sovereign.

If, as they tell us, the Old Testament be no longer available for our learning ; if the Jewish economy, in any part of it, be so abrogated as to contain no living and abiding instruction for all men ; then, certainly, christian rulers are left comparatively in the dark, to guess at the duties peculiar to their station, instead of having specific directions, such as are given to their subjects. But this is a partiality of which Holy Scripture, fairly examined, will not be found guilty. Who can read

the New Testament, with even moderate intelligence and attention, without perceiving that it is avowedly *a part* only of a book, and not the whole ? that it abounds with references and allusions to what has gone before, and what must be known in order that it may be understood ? For example, St. Paul tells us that *the blessing of Abraham* is come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ ; also he calls the blessings of the Gospel *the sure mercies of David*, and says, that all who believe are justified from all things from which they would not be justified by the *law of Moses*. These and similar phrases are of continual occurrence, without any accompanying explanation of the terms. It would have been imperative upon the writers of the New Testament to have explained such expressions, had their writings been intended for a complete independent work. By using such expressions without explanation, they take for granted that their readers are acquainted with them. In other words, their writings are manifestly and avowedly supplemental to that book which contains the histories of Abraham and Moses and David. It might indeed have been supposed that this was put beyond question by the explicit declaration of St. Paul concerning the leading incidents in the Jewish history, that they were written, not as *exceptions* of such insulated peculiarity as placed them beyond the reach of all imitation or ground of analogy, but as *examples* for our admonition ; and still more expressly concerning the whole canon of Jewish Scripture, that “ whatsoever

things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope."

Holy Scripture, in all its component parts, is the work of one Author, although centuries intervened between the publications of various portions of it. Its Author *ever liveth*, and the men employed by him as inditers of its successive chapters, were all, what one of them calls himself, *pens of a ready writer*, speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

We cannot imagine our royal student, under the instruction of the christian church into which he has been baptized, continuing to confine his attention to the concluding chapters of this divine book. And if he turn back to the earlier chapters, immediately all perplexity is removed ; because he there finds such reference (both by precept and example) to HIS *station and its duties*, so express, so full, so reiterated, as to supply the required compensation, and fully to account for the comparative silence upon that subject of the latter chapters.

In the Old Testament he finds, in the first place, a *nation* in a condition substantially similar to that in which his own nation now is ; a nation dedicated to the service of the Almighty in an outward and visible ordinance of revealed religion, while it comprised individual characters of every description. At an early period in the history of that nation, he finds that "God himself was their king." Here then he is supplied with the highest of all imaginable

examples. Nothing short of a perfect pattern is set before him.

This is a point which dissenters have found it difficult to meet, and their most distinguished living advocate has endeavoured to get rid of the difficulty by a very extraordinary argument.

Because the example of the divine King of Israel cannot be imitated perfectly and in its miraculous features, it is argued that it cannot be imitated at all. Dr. Wardlaw says, “ We grant it was a national establishment, but it was a national establishment of a character so peculiar and *unique* as to place it beyond the reach of imitation,—beyond the possibility of man’s ever, by any legislation of his, instituting anything like it.”²

“ I grant that Jehovah instituted a national church ; but then he instituted such a church, *with himself as the Supreme Head* of ecclesiastical and civil government in the nation, conducting his administration in both departments, by a system of supernatural interposition and immediate manifestation of his presence and authority, such as we mean by a theocracy ;—the nation itself by this means sustaining the twofold character of the *church* and the *state* : the church in its relation to Jehovah as its *God*,—the state, in relation to Jehovah as its *King*. Our question, then, is—*Can* this be imitated ? Comes it at all within the range of the imitable ? Is the conclusion a legitimate one,

² Wardlaw’s Lectures, iii. p. 101.

—that, because Jehovah instituted, and of course approved, a national church, *with* such a theocratic superintendence, he must, therefore, be considered as sanctioning the institution of one *without* it? Is the difference between the two cases indeed so trivial and circumstantial, as not at all to affect the validity of any inference from the one to the other? That God instituted a national church where the government was *divine*, must surely form a more than questionable ground for concluding that he approves of a national church where the government is merely *human*. So far from the difference being immaterial, it amounts to the difference between human and divine. That, surely, may be a right and safe constitution under the management of God, which is the very reverse of right and safe under the management of men. Instead of our being taught the propriety of uniting the church and state in the latter predicament, may not the legitimate lesson read to us by the Jewish constitution be, that in no other circumstances than under his own immediate superintendence, is such a union of the civil and the sacred admissible with benefit, or with safety? Seeing the only instance of an establishment that has had the sanction of divine authority is an establishment under a theocracy—who will undertake to prove, that the theocracy is not the very thing necessary to its having his approbation?"³

³ Wardlaw's Lectures, iii. p. 102.

Is there force in this argument? May not an example be imitable in some respects, and in some degree, which is not imitable universally and perfectly? May not this be the case, even where the inimitable part constitutes the peculiar and distinguishing part? Is not this the case in the highest, most comprehensive, and most undeniable of all christian duties, the following the example of our Saviour Christ? I am induced to apply this to the argument as urged by Dr. Wardlaw.

Our Lord Jesus Christ obeyed the law of God perfectly, but it was an obedience of a character so peculiar and *unique* as to place it beyond the reach of imitation. It was a spotless obedience, a meritorious obedience, an atoning obedience. Our question then is, Can it be imitated? Comes it at all within the range of the imitable? Is the conclusion a legitimate one, that, because a man *without* original sin obeyed the divine law, therefore he is to be held up as an example to be followed by a man *with* original sin? Is the difference between the two cases indeed trivial and circumstantial? So far from being immaterial, it amounts to the difference between *human* and *divine*. Instead of our being taught the propriety of imitating the obedience of Christ, may not the legitimate lesson read to us by the obedience of a man in whom there was the union of the divine nature, be, that in no other circumstances than under such a union can any man obey?

In a word, May not the total rejection of an

example, because of an inimitable peculiarity, be shown to be in direct opposition to the holy Scripture which says, that Jesus Christ, in his obedience to the law, left us an example, that we should follow his steps? And, per contra, if it be plainly and undeniably a scriptural duty in a sinful man to imitate the obedience of the divine Saviour, although his imitation must not only be defective in degree, but, with reference to the most distinguishing peculiarities, essentially different in kind; may it not be equally, i. e. imperatively, the scriptural duty of a sinful king to imitate the national institutions of the divine king of Israel, although his imitation must not only be defective in degree, but, with reference to the most distinguishing peculiarities, (miraculous interpositions, for example,) essentially different in kind? Thus, the same argument by which Dr. Wardlaw cuts off a christian king from all imitation of Jehovah of Israel, cuts off a christian man from all imitation of Jesus of Nazareth;—therefore it is an unsound argument; and therefore, unconvinced by it, we revert to our Jewish pattern.

What then did the king of Israel do? He gave commandment concerning national worship, and the support of a national priesthood. “ Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, He that offereth the sacrifice of his peace offerings unto the Lord, shall bring his oblation unto the Lord, of the sacrifice of his peace offerings. His own hands shall bring the offerings of the Lord made by fire, the fat with the

breast, it shall he bring; that the breast may be waved for a wave offering before the Lord. And the priest shall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breast shall be Aaron's and his sons. And the right shoulder shall ye give unto the priest for an heave offering, of the sacrifices of your peace offerings. He among the sons of Aaron that offereth the blood of the peace offerings and the fat, shall have the right shoulder for his part. *For the wave breast and the heave shoulder, have I taken of the children of Israel from off the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the priest, and unto his sons,* by a statute for ever from among the children of Israel. This is the portion of the anointing of Aaron, and of the anointing of his sons, out of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, in the day when he presented them to minister unto the Lord in the priest's office; which the Lord commanded to be given them of the children of Israel, in the day that he anointed them, by a statute for ever throughout their generations.”
(Lev. vii. 29—36.)

Thus national worship, and the support of a national priesthood, were inseparable. No man could bring his peace offerings before the Lord, and have the fat burned upon the altar, without, at the same time, contributing the breast and shoulder as the portion of the officiating priest. If the worship was imperative, so was the contribution. But here we are met by another broad and sweeping assertion of our opponents in this question. After de-

nying the legitimacy of the parallel with Israel, they proceed to say, that even granting such a parallel, it will not support the church argument, because all the offerings, under the Jewish ritual, were *voluntary*.

"No civil power possessed any right to assume headship or vicegerency under the Mosaic economy; nor to compel the Israelites to bring their tithes and offerings to the altar, this being left to their own consciences, or sense of religious obligation. Under the new dispensation the rule is, 'Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not *grudgingly* or of *necessity*; for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver.' And under the old it was not different; 'Whosoever is of a *willing* heart, let him bring his offerings unto the Lord.' Though Moses appointed punishments for every civil offence or neglect of duty, yet there were no corporal or temporal chastisements for those who refused or neglected to pay their tithes and offerings to the priest or Levite. In a word, the prince or ruler, *as such*, had no more right or authority to rule or domineer in sacred matters than the beggar at the gate."¹

"But where is the law, in the whole Mosaic code, for enforcing these contributions? I DEFY THE PRODUCTION OF ANY SUCH PROVISION!

"But in the whole Jewish economy you will find no coercion of tithes, or offerings. The people had to offer willingly, and take the consequences of neglecting it at God's *hands*. And thus the Old

¹ Thorn's Union of Church and State, p. 50

Testament will not support our friends in their view.”³

Dr. Wardlaw also calls the Jewish offerings *spontaneous.*⁴

With this view they press exceedingly a parallel which it seems St. Paul himself points out, between the support of the Levitical priest, and the support of the christian ministry. “ Do you not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple ? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar ? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel shall live of the gospel.” (1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.) This is reiterated in triumph as proving conclusively, that as all the offerings on the Jewish altar were voluntary, *even so* all support of the christian ministry should be voluntary : and we are dared to show any provision for the enforcement of those Jewish offerings. We accept this challenge ; and undertake to show that those offerings, which, we have already seen, were inseparable from the support of the priesthood, those offerings to which, the apostle makes specific allusion when he says that the priests were *partakers with the altar*, (a part of the offering being burned on the altar, and a part being the priest’s portion,) that those offerings, I repeat, were *compulsory* in the highest and most unequivocal sense. If this can be fairly shown, it ought to produce some effect upon candid disputants, and I am not without encouraging hope that

³ Mr. Burnett’s Speech at Hertford.

⁴ Lectures, p. 87.

it will. For the proof I refer first to Lev. xvii. 2—5. “ Speak unto Aaron, and to his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them ; This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded, saying, What man soever there be of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the Lord before the tabernacle of the Lord ; blood shall be imputed unto that man ; he hath shed blood ; and that man shall be cut off from among his people : To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the Lord, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest, and offer them for peace offerings unto the Lord.” It appears from this that there were some worshippers in Israel, who had separated themselves from the national altar, and were offering their sacrifices in the open field. By so doing they defrauded the priest of his allotted portion. Here, such persons, and all worshippers in the nation, are commanded to bring their sacrifices to the door of the tabernacle, or national church ; and offer them through the instrumentality of the national priesthood. In so doing, they must, as we have seen, contribute to the support of that priesthood. And under what *penalty*? for that is the point strictly before us. The penalty upon the recusant was, “ that man shall be *cut off* from among his people.” This sounds very like

compulsion. But it will be argued that the expression *cut off* from among his people, signifies some providential visitation, so that the sanction was still kept in God's own hand, and no temporal penalty was incurred to be inflicted by the hand of man. The question now turns upon the true meaning of this phrase, "cut off from among his people." It is frequently used, so that we have the advantage of various contexts, in making search for its meaning. I refer to Exod. xxxi. 14. "Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people." Here the phrase is identified with the more unequivocal form of expression, "shall surely be put to death." Still it may be argued, this putting to death for such offences, was a providential visitation threatened, and not a temporal execution to be conducted by the hand of man. Once more, then, I compare the enactment just read, with the following history. "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done with him. And the Lord said unto Moses, The man shall surely be put to death." This was according to the law, delivered, as we have seen, in Exodus; but they appear to have hesitated as to the

mode of its application. In what here follows, their divine lawgiver removes all doubt ; “all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died : as the Lord commanded Moses.” (Numb. xv. 32—36.)

Thus, first, every worshipper at the door of the Jewish tabernacle contributed, and could not but contribute, towards the support of the national priesthood ; second, every worshipper who attempted to worship elsewhere, thereby defrauding the priest of his portion, was commanded by God himself to bring his offerings to the tabernacle, on pain of being *cut off* from among his people ; third, this phrase, “*cut off from among his people*,” is identified with being put to death ; and, fourthly, this being put to death, is shown to be a public execution by the hand of man ! Is not this coercion ?

And yet our eloquent voluntaries exclaim with honest (is it fully informed ?) indignation, *Where is the law, in the whole Mosaic code, for enforcing these contributions ? I defy the production of any such provision !*

I anticipate an objection. It will be said, If the Jewish theocracy be pleaded as a pattern for imitation by christian rulers, it must be followed out consistently ; penal, nay, exterminating laws enacted, and all idolaters, sabbath breakers, and heretics, consigned to the executioner.

This, if advanced merely as a flippant retort, would not be entitled to much attention ; but as a

serious difficulty in the way of candid inquirers, seeming to damage the whole force of the scriptural parallel, it demands grave and careful consideration.

It sounds plausible, but is it really conclusive ? Is there no difference between adopting a general principle as of permanent and transferable application, and adopting all the details to which that principle has at any particular period been applied ? May not the principle of coercion by penalty stand, and yet the nature or extent of the penalty be altered ?

Surely we are all familiar with the difference between the principle of any great legislative measure which is decided on what is called its second reading, and the modifications of it in detail which it may undergo in committee ; and with the fact that those modifications may be great, and extend to important practical details, without affecting the general principle.

You adopt the principle of some great precedent. For example, in a municipal bill for Ireland, you adopt the principle of the English or Scotch precedent, and so pass the second reading ; yet, in committee you alter several important features, so that the practical working of the measure in Ireland will be substantially different from its working in England or Scotland, while the principle remains the same ; and your imitation of the precedent is legitimate, although not followed out by the adoption of all its details.

We think that the word of God requires that a

christian government should adopt the principle of the Jewish precedent: that is, of a national provision for the means of national worship, to be secured by compulsion, should compulsion be rendered necessary by resistance. Let this stand. And let the details of its management, both as regards the nature of those means, and the nature of the penalty by which the provision is enforced, be open for wise and judicious modification. Let the penalty be modified so as not to touch the conscience or person of any man, but only his property. The demand is a charge, not upon liberty, whether of mind or body, but upon property. It compels not to conformity in either doctrine or worship, but only to a pecuniary contribution for the supply of outward means. This will meet the exigencies of the case, and while the measure, in its practical working, will be substantially different in England from what it was in Israel, the principle will be the same, and our imitation of the great precedent truly legitimate.

In truth, we are invited to some such modification, by the fact that the best of the Jewish kings, while maintaining the principle, did not follow out all the details of theocracy. David refused to have Shimei put to death, although the king himself had been the object of his irritating blasphemy: afterwards Solomon commuted the capital punishment incurred by that offender, into confinement within the city; and eventually, it was for disobedience to the king's orders (and not

for blasphemy) that he was put to death. Other modifications of the theocracy, in its practical working, might be pointed out in the history of the Jewish kingdom, while nevertheless the general principle of a national establishment of religion was fully maintained.

This leads to an enlargement of our argument. The Jewish theocracy is not to be given up, as inapplicable. On the contrary; it has, I think, been most legitimately applied. But we are not confined to it, for a pattern. Attention is next invited to the Jewish kingdom, which succeeded the theocracy.

Our royal student, in prosecuting his inquiries concerning his scriptural duty, will find an announcement of a period when the Jewish theocracy was to cease, accompanied by instructions concerning the kingdom which was to follow. “ When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother. But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither

shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away : neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold. And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites : and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life : that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them : that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left : to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel. (Deut. xvii. 14—20.)

It is worthy of observation, that in immediate connexion with this prophetical description of the king, we find a repetition of the commandment concerning the priest's portion. “ The priests, the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel : they shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and his inheritance. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren : the Lord is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them. And this shall be the *priest's due* from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether it be ox or sheep ; and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw. The first fruit also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the

fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him. For the Lord thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons for ever." (Deut. xviii. 1—5.)

Our royal student would find, moreover, the actual history of this predicted transition from the theocracy to the kingdom, together with a solemn warning to both king and people, that their national prosperity depended upon their obedience to the commandment of the Lord their God. "And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us: when the Lord your God was your king. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the Lord hath set a king over you. If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall both ye, and also the king that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God: but if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers." (1 Sam. xii. 12—15.)

At this point *the theocracy* properly so called, ceased: and from this period, the government of God over Israel, though occasionally more manifest, was no more direct than it is now over England. Dr. Wardlaw should have remembered this, and considered that even if he

succeeded in setting aside the theocracy, he did not thereby deprive us of the example of the kingdom of David and Solomon and their successors. Christian rulers honestly desirous of ascertaining their scriptural duty, would not fail to observe, that in the kingdom of the Ten Tribes who forsook the national altar, and whose monarchs encouraged idolatry, one disaster followed rapidly upon another, until their utter ruin vindicated the divine veracity ; while in the kingdom of Judah, whose rulers were of a chequered character, national prosperity was always proportioned to the vigour of the sovereign in maintaining the national religion. Neither could such students fail to read with the liveliest interest, the history of the reformations effected under Hezekiah, Josiah and Nehemiah. After an animated description of the cleansing of the temple, and the celebration of the Passover, both at the express commandment of king Hezekiah, we read this history of his efficient provision for the national priesthood. “ Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities. And Hezekiah appointed the courses of the priests and Levites after their courses,

every man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister, and to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the tents of the Lord. He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offerings ; to wit, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feasts, as it is written in the law of the Lord. Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord." What the consequence of disobedience to this commandment would have been, we cannot say : but it is begging the question to assert that the king would have allowed his authority to be despised with impunity, and that *no penalty* would have been incurred by the recusant : though it would entirely accord with other features in the history, to presume, that Hezekiah, in the consciousness of his own fallibility and responsibility, might not have felt it right to inflict that *full penalty* which was quite right at the hand of the infallible and irresponsible Jehovah. But he received no provocation : for it follows :— " And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the first-fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field ; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly. And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen

and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the Lord their God, and laid them by heaps. And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.” (2 Chron. xxxi. 1—6, and 20, 21.)

It is by such a line of argument, that we arrive at the matured conviction, not hastily or unadvisedly adopted, but after patient and dispassionate consideration of what has been ably and zealously said by our opponents in this question; that it is the first and highest duty of every christian government to provide the means of specifically christian instruction (or in other words to locate and support the ministers of the christian church) for the entire population over whom they are providentially placed.

I would not, indeed, imitate some of our opponents, and utter defiances in this question. But I would urge an affectionate and earnest entreaty, for candid examination of this line of reasoning, from those dissenters (and they are numerous) who receive the Holy Scriptures as of paramount authority.

If it be said, that among those who are compelled to pay national tribute, there are some who are conscientiously opposed to a national church, and that, consequently, to force them to contribute to

such a church, is to *force their conscience*, which is unjustifiable tyranny ; we reply, first, that the scruples or objections of the subject, whether conscientious or otherwise, ought not to interfere with the general duty of the government. If they do, there can be no such thing as *government*. If it be right to give up a national church, because some conscientiously object to an establishment; it is equally right to give up army and navy, because some conscientiously object to war. It is no answer to this to say, that they who think an established church unlawful are *many*, while they who think war unlawful are *few*. The question is, whether it be *right* in government to support, by national funds, an institution which is beneficial to the nation, although some of the people conscientiously object to it ? and if it be wrong in a government so to do in one case, it is equally *wrong*, though it might not excite so much clamour, to do it in another case. If it be wrong—if it be coercion of conscience—if it be shameful tyranny in the government to compel one thousand dissenters to pay taxes, a portion of which shall be devoted to the extension of the national church ; it is equally wrong—equally coercive of conscience—equally shameful tyranny—and more disgraceful persecution, because committed against a weaker and more defenceless body; to compel one single helpless quaker to pay taxes, a portion of which shall be devoted to the support or enlargement, if need be, of the national army.

But, secondly, there is no *forcing of conscience* in the case, even where there is a forcing of payment. The scriptural distinction between these two will be evident, if we change our point of view, and instead of considering the duty of a professedly christian legislature, we consider the hardship of persecuted christian individuals; if we imagine dissenters in the position which they are fond of appropriating, a position of suffering for conscience sake; if we suppose them the only true Christians in this land, surrounded by powerful and persecuting heathens; if we suppose our sovereign no better, in this point of view, than a pagan Roman emperor—our clergy no better than the priests of Jupiter—our collectors of taxes no better than Cæsar's publicans—and our dissenting neighbours like the primitive church in all the simplicity and purity of inevitable voluntaryism—what then? Why, then, we remind those dissenters of the saying of the Lord Jesus, who not only commanded his first followers to render to God the things which are God's, but also to render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's. We remind them that tribute was Cæsar's, and that the apostle said, render to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due. We remind them that a large portion of the tribute so paid was squandered on idolatrous worship; but that the great apostle, instead of encouraging resistance to the pagan church-rate on that account, and indulging in piteous lamentations over violated consciences; did, with the most simple, unconstrained, and unostentatious submission to

"the powers that be," command the primitive Christians to pay the rate. Supposing, then, that all which the most hostile disputer has been able to say or fancy against the established church were perfectly true; still, if dissenting ministers followed the example of the apostles, they would say to their people, "tribute to whom tribute is due." But dissenters often misrepresent, perhaps misunderstand, this payment, as if it were a demand upon them to *support the religion of the church*, and they complain loudly against the injustice of being *compelled* to support a *religion* of which they conscientiously disapprove. We deny that any dissenter is compelled to support our religion. He is compelled to pay tithes and rates, by which the external machinery of our church is supported, but this is a very different thing from supporting our religion. True, the civil ruler, when he receives the taxes, appropriates a portion of them to the support of the church, but this is *his act*, not the act of the man who pays the tax. This distinction will be made manifest to all, by considering for a moment whether the apostle would have exhorted his christian brethren to *support idol worship*: on the contrary, an apostolical exhortation is, "keep yourself from idols." But we have seen that the apostle *did* exhort his brethren to pay tribute to Cæsar, although Cæsar, when he got it, appropriated a portion of it to the support of idol worship. That was *his act*, not the act of the man who paid the tribute. It would be monstrous to

say that every man who pays taxes to a government is responsible for its every act. No ; the subject is responsible to God for the duty of *paying* the tribute, and the government is responsible to God for the duty of *appropriating* that tribute. The government receiving taxes may, in one or more instances, make an erroneous, unjust, and unjustifiable appropriation ; but the conscience of the man who pays the taxes is in no way implicated. His pocket is assailed, indeed, but not his conscience. This is a most important distinction, not for the dissenter only, but for us all. We all pay taxes, but we in this room are in no wise implicated in conscience, in what appears to us the guilt, the anti-English, anti-christian, suicidal guilt of our government in the support of Maynooth College ; neither is the dissenter implicated in conscience in what appears to him to be the guilt, the unjust and oppressive guilt, of the government in maintaining the established church. In this argument I have been conceding to the dissenter, for argument sake, the hypothesis that the church is evil. I have been putting it on a par with Maynooth College. And even so, I have been proving, and proving scripturally, that it is the duty of the dissenters to pay the tribute. But how much is our argument strengthened by the fact that the church is not evil, but good !—that instead of being put upon a par with Maynooth College, she protests against the abominations taught there, as idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians !

This contrast is, indeed, indispensable, for the completeness of our argument. Because it might be fairly urged that although it is our christian duty, while the law continues unchanged, to pay the tribute, however it may be applied ; yet if we conscientiously believe the application of it to be unchristian, it becomes our duty to seek, by all constitutional means, to procure a change in the law. This is freely and fully granted. In the case of Maynooth, this is our own feeling, and our own practice. And we cannot and do not object to a similar feeling and practice in a dissenter, towards our established church, so long as he is conscientiously persuaded that it is unchristian. We have no wish whatever to restrain his constitutional privilege ; our wish, and aim, and hope, are to gain his candid attention, if so be, we may by sound arguments convince his judgment, and alter his convictions, with regard to the duty of seeking a change in our law. And in the mean time, so long as the law is not changed, we claim from him the exercise of that christian forbearance which declines to take the law into its own hands.

I have thus endeavoured to vindicate as scriptural, the position with respect to the state occupied by our national church, and to encourage our rulers to act liberally and largely *for the whole nation*, seeing they can act scripturally, and safely, by means of our church so placed ; nay, more, to consider that, until they view the whole nation as a whole, in the light of possessing a claim upon their

christian influence as rulers, they are not, and cannot be, in the performance of their own highest duties.

ii. In further commendation of the excellence and value of our national church, I proceed now to show, that where Scripture is not express, or wholly silent so far as a direct text is concerned, our ecclesiastical instrumentality is scriptural in *principle*.

Up to a certain point, holy Scripture is express, and so far, of course, no deviation is admissible. The difficulty commences in those matters of arrangement not prescribed in Scripture, but afterwards found requisite for the maintenance of decency and order, and for the more effectual division and distribution of labour. In these a latitude ought plainly to be conceded ; for why is Scripture silent concerning them ? He who saw the end from the beginning could easily have prescribed in *all* things, as he has done in some; had he considered uniformity in all things essential to the accomplishment of his great and gracious purpose. Consequently the fact of his silence on some points, viewed in connexion with his precise directions on others, proclaims that there may, in some things, be variety of arrangement without vitiating fundamental Christianity. An example of this distinction will be found interesting and explanatory. Baptism by water is prescribed as a part of christian instrumentality. The use of water, therefore, is indispensable, no choice is left. But the quantity, the temperature, the mode of application, whether in a river, like some who

went into Jordan, or in a room, like some in the jailor's house at Philippi ; whether with a form of words appointed for the officiating minister to use, or left to the extemporaneous judgment of the minister ; whether to infants exclusively, or to adults exclusively, or to either, as the case may be ; on these, and many such points, the Lord is silent. Why ? Because no uniform mode is essential to his purpose ; and, perhaps, he would, by leaving his disciples an opportunity for the exercise of discretion, leave them also an opportunity for the exercise of mutual forbearance.

Surely the language of sound reason, as well as of humble piety, in any man or body of men, upon this subject, should be, Where the Lord has prescribed, how shall I deviate, to add or to diminish ? And how shall I prescribe as essential, where the Lord has not prescribed ? Where He has shut, how shall I dare to open ; and where He has left open, how shall I dare to shut ?

It is with unfeigned satisfaction we call attention to the line adopted by our national church. Concerning the sufficiency of Scripture, she is as pointed and peremptory as Scripture itself, declaring that it contains all things necessary to salvation. Concerning the necessity of scriptural doctrine, as condensed in the creeds of the primitive church, she boldly and honestly pronounces with her Lord, that except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved. She does not attempt to open, where her divine Master has shut. But concerning tradi-

tions and ceremonies, however valuable in themselves, she frankly volunteers the declaration, that uniformity is not necessary ; she adds the important historical statement, that *at all times they have been divers* ; and draws the legitimate conclusion, that “every particular or national church hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites of the church, ordained only by man’s authority, so that all things be done to edifying.” (Art. xxxiv.) Where her divine Master has left open, she does not attempt to shut.

In palpable opposition to this wisdom, it has been argued by some of her members, that the practice of the primitive church supplies a sufficient reason why we should prescribe. Perhaps, however, it supplies no more than a reason why we should *prefer*. Where the practice of the primitive church can be accurately ascertained, and where it is not opposed to anything written in the Scripture, it surely supplies a sufficient reason for preference ; and, without claiming for them infallibility of precision in every point, we yet greatly rejoice in the discrimination evinced by our English reformers, who, in cancelling and abjuring Romish corruptions, did not leave themselves destitute of primitive precedents.

But has the practice of the primitive church, even where certainly known and containing nothing unscriptural, the weight of a divine precept ?

To answer in the affirmative, is to elevate tradition to a parallel platform with revelation ; the practical result of which is to lower revelation into

comparative disregard. Because if revelation and tradition be decided to be of equal authority, men will give practical preference to whichever is found most congenial ; and as the commandments of men will always be found less holy, and just, and good, less opposed to human appetites, less spiritual in themselves, and less sanctifying in their influence than the commandments of God ; they will for that reason prove more congenial to fallen man ; and so tradition will usurp, as it ever has usurped, a practical precedence above revelation. It cannot continue parallel. If not completely and avowedly *subject to*, it will effectually *make void*, the word of God.

But if the practice of the primitive church have not the weight of a divine precept; then an essential distinction is established between what is prescribed in Scripture, and what is not so prescribed, although it be proved to have been practised from the beginning. It is the distinction between unchanging universal principle, and varying personal preference. To lower such principle into a matter of mere preference, is infidelity : to elevate such preference into the commanding place of principle, is bigotry. To discriminate as our church does, is to combine christian faithfulness with christian charity.

Our church expressly declares the “preaching of the pure word of God” to be a necessary mark of a christian church, but she no where declares that a liturgy is necessary, or a written creed, or

the sprinkling of water, as distinct from immersion in baptism, or kneeling at the Lord's supper, or diocesan episcopacy. All these she prefers, and with good reason ; but none of these does she prescribe as indispensable to the existence of a christian church. She distinguishes between commanding them as *ancient practices*, and imposing them as *divine commands*. Her language on the subject of the orders in the ministry is this :—

“ It is evident unto all men diligently reading the holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's church : bishops, priests, and deacons. Which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same ; and also by publick prayer, with imposition of hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful authority. And therefore, to the intent that these orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed, in the United Church of England and Ireland ; no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful bishop, priest, or deacon, in the United Church of England and Ireland, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had formerly episcopal consecration or ordination.”

Here she asserts their antiquity, as a matter of

fact, and adopts them as indispensable, *in the Church of England and Ireland*: but thanks be to God, she nowhere identifies the Church of England with the Church of Christ.

She acts in conformity with that fruitful saying of the great German reformer, “Charity beareth all things, faith nothing.” Where the faith of the Gospel of God is involved, our church is nobly inflexible: but in everything short of that faith, in all the varying ceremonial of human instrumentality, she is as nobly charitable.

Why then, it is asked, why not hold reciprocity of communion with those churches which prefer other modes of worship? The answer lies in another important distinction, namely, between communion in the congregation as worshippers, and communion personally as brethren. For *congregational* communion every church must maintain her preferences inviolate, else there could be no decency and order, in compliance with apostolical precept, no security to her children of finding at all times the modes of worship which they have been taught to prefer, and for which many of them imbibe an attachment of reverential piety greatly productive of devotion. But *personally*, our church interposes no barrier to brotherly communion with other bodies. Surely this combination of faithful testimony for God, and forbearing moderation among men, is an unquestionable excellence in our national church.

LECTURE V.

PRACTICAL EFFICIENCY OF THE CHURCH HINDERED BY LIMITATION IN EXTENT—THE JOINT OPERATION OF THE CHURCH IN ITS PRESENT DIMENSIONS, AND OF THE VOLUNTARY SYSTEM, WHOLLY INADEQUATE UNDER EXISTING CIRCUMSTANCES—PROOF IN THE ACTUAL STATE OF THE COUNTRY—ROOT OF THE WHOLE EVIL, WANT OF REAL CONFIDENCE IN REVELATION—ENGLISH GENTLEMEN APPEALED TO—VAIN TO EXPECT UNANIMITY IN THE MODE—RIGHT TO PROCEED NOTWITHSTANDING—HALF MEASURES USELESS AND DANGEROUS—IF MORE BE NOT DONE, TOO MUCH HAS BEEN DONE ALREADY—IN DOING MORE, PAROCHIAL SUBDIVISION INDISPENSABLE; AND IF THOROUGHLY ACCOMPLISHED, EFFECTUAL AS FAR AS HUMAN MEANS CAN BE.

IT has been my endeavour: first, to exhibit the scriptural character of our national church considered in itself: secondly, the scriptural aspect of its wisely regulated connexion with the civil power: and, thirdly, the scriptural duty of the civil power, in the national use of such an instrumentality, as it has pleased Almighty God to supply to them, in the inspired writings, and divinely appointed officers and ordinances of the christian church.

It might naturally be anticipated, that a national

arrangement, so much in accordance with the revealed will of God, would be productive of the happiest results to the community so favoured ; and so indeed it has been. The facts of the case fully justify the expectation. Our appeal is to facts, to the brilliant facts of our national history, at home and abroad ; to facts which, whether considered in the light of naval or military achievement, or in the nobler light of commercial enterprise, of art and science, of humanity and liberty ; bear ample testimony to the fostering care of the divine blessing : since the period when our scriptural arrangement was first fully established under Elizabeth, (and when, let it never be forgotten, our glorious national poor law was the immediate offspring of our more glorious national Protestantism,) and more particularly since the period of the rescue of our scriptural arrangement from Popish aggression, and its reconsolidation on firmer grounds, under the more enlightened toleration, and more determined “no surrender,” of William of Orange. I repeat, our appeal, for the results of a national establishment of a scriptural church, is to the transcendent facts of English history, from the first of William the Third, of English peace at home, while all Europe beside was convulsed in revolutionary struggles, and English prowess abroad, when all Europe was combined under military despotism, down to the last of George the Third, whose removal gave occasion to the opening of that fatal door ; into which, while a right honourable baronet

entered with faltering steps, he uttered an acknowledgment, evincing a sagacity all but prophetic ; at the expense, alas, of a consistency, which had it sustained no enfeebling wound then, would have rendered him more than irresistibly victorious now. But he left a vulnerable tendon, which has been so often hit, that Achilles halts : inferior chiefs are paralysed ; disunion is in the camp ; and consequent disaster in the campaign,

Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi.

Of course the church has suffered. Her bitterest enemies have been taken into counsel as to her practical treatment ; and, as might be expected, under the mask of aiming at her improvement, they are systematically compassing her destruction. Already they have chanted the commencement of their song of triumph, in the form of a requiem over ten departed bishoprics.

It is true, that for the present they have refrained from adding another strain, on the appropriation of her revenues : but it is perfectly obvious that that must soon be ; unless her members throughout the nation, awaking from the quiescent aversion to agitation which they have learned in her venerable and peaceful bosom, and perceiving that their mother is really assailed ; shall say to their representatives speedily, plainly, decidedly, in a tone not to be mistaken, that it must not be. And not only so ; but that her resources must be increased, and her maternal arms enlarged to embrace the multiplying

thousands of the national family ; while, at the same time, they urge with earnest affection, every practicable improvement in her internal administration, whether financial, or educational, or both.

Her practical efficiency is obstructed by causes, which may be profitably considered under two general heads :—

First, with reference to that part of the population of the country, which has wholly overgrown the utmost possible reach of the instrumentality provided. And, *secondly*, with reference to that part which is supplied with church accommodation, and pastoral superintendence. In other words, the practical inefficiency of the church may be considered, first as regards its *extent*, and secondly as regards its *working*. The first is our present subject.

It is a plain matter of fact, that the population of the country has largely overgrown not only the parochial provision originally made for their religious instruction, but also all the additions which have from time to time been made to that provision, whether by national grants, or individual beneficence. The melancholy proof of this is a matter not of argument, but of figures. We have only to refer to the population returns, and compare the numbers with the accommodation provided in all our churches and chapels, to be painfully convinced that hundreds of thousands of our fellow countrymen are destitute, inevitably so, of every species of religious instruction. Why should

the numbers be repeated ? They are already plainly, and repeatedly, and in detail, before the country. The charges of several of our bishops, the reports of several of our religious societies, acts of parliament, publications of individuals, both clergymen and laymen, and above all, the Second Report of the Church Commissioners, have reiterated the melancholy information on the most undeniable evidence. And this state of things grows annually worse. The increase of the population rapidly outruns all that is done, or can be done, without national, i. e. parliamentary interference, for the multiplication of churches and teachers. I will not occupy your time by repeating here what may be so easily procured and read. My object is rather to inquire into the *cause* or causes of so deplorable a fact. Why is it that, with all the advantages of an endowed establishment up to certain bounds, and an open door for active christian voluntaryism beyond those bounds, we still have the stream of our home population so fearfully overflowing all the conduits prepared for their religious cultivation ?

Various, of course, are the suggested solutions of this phenomenon. Some dissenters assign the existence of an ecclesiastical establishment as the cause. They describe such an establishment as not only evil in itself, but also as hindering good in others. The “voluntary principle” is said not to have fair scope for action wherever there is an endowed establishment. But it may fairly and reasonably be asked, why so ? For what is the

voluntary principle ? I shall not misrepresent it ; or if I do, Dr. Wardlaw shall be to blame, and not I, for I now read his description of it.

“ For what is the voluntary principle ? What, but the principle of ‘ faith working by love ? ’—what, but the principle of zeal for the glory of Christ, inspired by this love, and operating, in cheerful contribution and active effort, for the support and extension of the knowledge of his name, and of the principles of his spiritual reign ? The advocates of the voluntary principle hold and avow the conviction, that to the operation of this faith, and love, and zeal, and liberality, and effort, within the church of God itself, the church’s exalted Head was pleased to commit the interests of his cause on earth. There is nothing in their principles which they would shrink from ‘ proclaiming on the house-tops.’ They are aware that they could not be distinguished from others by merely holding the general obligation of christian charity,—of spontaneous or voluntary liberality. Where is the man that would retain the name of Christian, and deny that ? They admit freely, that their principle includes the distinct denial of the right of the state to interfere at all—by legislation, by endowment, or otherwise—for the support and extension of the church ; and the no less distinct affirmation, that this is the church’s own business, the special duty and privilege of its members—a duty enjoined, a privilege conferred, on all his faithful subjects, by the King of Zion ; a charge left by him with them,

and with them alone; a charge of which they alone can feel the obligation, and which they alone can legitimately fulfil. It is necessary to be quite explicit here. Honesty to our opponents, and faithfulness to Christ, alike require it. Dr. Chalmers pleads for the exercise of the voluntary principle; but then he contends that the state has its part to act in the matter as well as the church. Here we differ. This is what we peremptorily and *in toto* deny. We hold the church's support and extension to be the church's own concern, to be effected from her own resources, and by her own efforts, in dependence on the blessing of her great and glorious Head, to the exclusion of all such political interference. In its operation within the church, our principle is simply that of *the strong helping the weak*; of those who *have*, imparting to those who *have not*—in the generous spirit of Him who said, and in saying it, spoke from a divine experience of the truth of his words—‘It is more blessed to give than to receive:’ and when it extends beyond the church, and, along with its internal support, aims at its enlargement, it is then the principle of compassion for perishing men, seeking their salvation; the principle of solicitude for the honour of the Redeemer, seeking the multiplication of his subjects. I am speaking now of *what the principle is.*”¹

Is then this principle, thus loftily described, so

¹ Wardlaw’s Lectures, i. p. 38.

easily checked in its operations, subdued and paralysed ; that the exaction (say, for argument sake, and to cut off excuse, the unjust exaction,) of a small sum of money from its advocates, should render its expansive power so abortive ? The *amount* of the exaction cannot be the cause. In point of fact, the payment in question is not an exaction at all from any dissenter in the kingdom. Every individual among them who possesses property has obtained it subject to the charge before us, and on terms proportionably more favourable than he could have made, had the property been liable to no such charge. Purchasing or inheriting on such terms, he has no right to complain of the tenure. To seek to get rid of such a charge without volunteering to pay an equivalent somewhere, may be entitled to a respectable place in the code of voluntaryism ; but to us it wears the aspect of very questionable honesty. It is utterly absurd to allege that the voluntary principle is hindered by the amount of our ecclesiastical charges so paid by dissenters. What, then, is the hindrance ? Is the voluntary system so proudly monopolising, that it will not work, unless it may have the self-complacency of doing *all* the work ? Is it so envious of the degree of credit which might attach to the establishment if the work were done, that it restrains its own work, until the establishment be got rid of ? Or is it so sickly and sentimental, so utterly unfit for the masculine task of propagating truth in a wicked world, that it cannot exert its energies for

the horror it entertains of the gigantic wickedness of an establishment? Surely, if it be the divine principle which its advocates describe, it ought to rise superior to all this timidity, and all this envy, and all this selfishness; and find in surrounding wickedness a stimulus, and not a check. What stops it then, we repeat? Why, with all its boasted capability, is the country still in such a state?

Many churchmen look no farther for the cause of the present deplorable deficiency, than to the refusal of the legislature to vote adequate grants for the building and endowment of a sufficient number of churches. Doubtless this is a proximate cause; but before we can approach the suggestion of a remedy, it is indispensable to go deeper, and inquire into the causes of this refusal.

The chief cause, if I do not greatly mistake, is *a want of confidence in revelation.*

There exists a growing reference to the sincerity or even the scruples of men, rather than to the revealed will of God, as a ground of duty. Hence in doubtful matters, the chief aim seems to be to attain the greatest possible amount of unanimity for present convenience, whatever may be the bearing of the measure so adopted, upon the interests of eternal truth. There does not appear to be sufficient *confidence of heart* in the reality and majesty of truth, to induce men to incur apparent risks among their fellow men, for the sake of obedience to Almighty God. The character, presence, and power of Jehovah are *unfelt*, and religion is looked

upon as a matter of human sincerity, rather than divine revelation. Human sincerity is as variable as the human countenance. It is no proof whatever of truth in a fallen creature. "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but in the end thereof are the ways of death." Behold, said the Lord Jesus Christ to his disciples, "beware of men, they shall put you out of their synagogues, yea the time cometh when whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." That is, they will be sincere, religiously sincere, in committing murder ! Who can doubt the sincerity of Saul of Tarsus in aiding and abetting the murder of Stephen ? To what state then are we fallen, if we have no more fixed and unalterable standard of right and wrong than the sincerity of men, and no safer guide in the adoption of practical measures than the fluctuating majorities of men ?

An inevitable consequence has been the growth of a feeling of *injustice* attending the propagation, by public funds, of what only a part of the population approve. In such a state of the public mind it is manifestly impossible that any *great* project upon any subject can be carried : for what scheme deserving the character of *great* was ever carried without dissentient voices ? and what is it that has given practical success to such schemes, but a *confidence of right* in the measure so strong as to be felt and hailed as a justification for proceeding, in the face of the dissentients however clamorous !

The great scheme of Negro Emancipation was

carried by such a *confidence of right* in the claims of humanity, as served to justify a practical disregard of the remonstrances of the West Indian proprietors. Their feeling of the injustice of the measure was strong, (notwithstanding the compensation made them,) and their language was vehement, and their numbers were large, and their influence was great; and had there not been a paramount *confidence of right* in the great measure, they would not only have postponed it as they did, but also they would have eventually defeated it.

I do not in this compare negro emancipation with church extension: I am aware of the many points of dissimilitude which might be urged; I refer to it in illustration of the *state of the public mind* with reference to dissentients, which is indispensable in order to go through with any great measure. If there existed such a paramount confidence of right in the claims of Christianity as taught by the church, as there did exist in the claims of humanity urged on behalf of the negro; then the objections and remonstrances of dissenters would be treated like the objections and remonstrances of the West Indian proprietors, and a great measure, though demanding millions of the public revenue, would be carried, for keeping the framework of christian instrumentality proportioned to the rapidly increasing population of Great Britain. Where no such confidence of right exists, and where there exists at the same time a lingering reluctance to avow the irreligious indifference, every

objection is hailed as an excuse. The excuse now pleaded against the charge of indifference to Christianity itself, is, that the difficulty arises, not from any such infidel disregard of Christianity *in toto*, but from inability to give such practical preference to Christianity *as taught by the church*. This plea enables men to deceive themselves into the persuasion that they would gladly exert their influence for the extension of true religion, but that the conflicting interests and views of opposing sects present an insurmountable and consequently a justifying hindrance in the way of any measure : and thus they are enabled to ascribe their practical apathy, not to infidel indifference, its real source, but to a punctilious respect for even-handed justice, and a religious tenderness for the rights of conscience. Nothing can be more agreeable to the individual, shrinking from a sense of responsibility, than this flattering self-deception, while in the mean time nothing can be more disastrous to the country than its aggregate effect.

If there existed a *confidence of right* in the claims of Christianity at all, and a consequent real willingness to extend it over the nation, *something would be done*. The increasing population *could not* be left as they now are. It might not, indeed, and would not, be possible to adopt any plan equally agreeable to all parties ; but *some plan* would unquestionably be adopted, and the objections of those opposed to it would, as a lesser of evils, be made to give way. Churchmen ask for additional churches and endowed

ministers, at the public expense, to teach a known and defined creed, which is proved to be scriptural, and the good effects of which are manifest wherever it is taught. Dissenters ask for the unencumbered voluntary principle, that all endowments should cease, and the christian church, as a community independent *per se*, be let alone to its own resources ; when, as they allege, it will spring forth with all the elasticity of its primitive expansiveness, and fill the land.

We would respectfully, but most earnestly, implore our legislature to adopt one or other of these plans, boldly and decidedly. If the plan proposed by the dissenters be right, let a *confidence of right* in it be manifested. If the framework of christianizing means, which has already reached a part, and a large part, of the population, should be wholly removed to give free scope for a different species of means, which we are assured would not only fill the vacant space, but extend itself by an innate energy over the entire of the unreclaimed surface : if it be *right* to do this, let no trembling apprehension of the danger of the momentous experiment ; no lingering respect for a system now at last seen, and known, and felt to be *wrong* ; no human considerations of vested rights in secular possessions, which should weigh but as a feather in the scale ; no deference to the conscientious objections of churchmen ;—let nothing interfere with the bold, the grand, the noble accomplishment of what will effectually extend the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the contrary, if the plan proposed by churchmen be right; if it be right that the state should have the security of a known and published creed, a known and published discipline; if that creed be scriptural in the letter, and that discipline be scriptural in principle; if the means so adopted have worked good, upon the whole, as far as they have been extended; if the increased extension of them can be accomplished without any demolition, or even disturbance of the framework already in operation: if this be indeed the right course to adopt, and if the machinery for the required extension be ready at hand, requiring only funds to call it into operation; then, let *confidence* in it be manifested, and let no objections of those who are opposed to it prevent a grant, not of thousands only, but of millions of money, to erect and endow the requisite buildings; to call forth, through the instrumentality of our bishops, the requisite men; and to make the requisite territorial subdivisions of the parishes, where the population is at present wholly and enormously unmanageable.

To take a decided step in a doubtful and dangerous path requires a decided mind; and surely if *confidence of heart* in the revealed truth of God were at all general, such decision of mind would be the result.

If there be justice in these observations, the remedy, the only effectual remedy for existing evils is to be found in the revival of personal religion amongst our rulers.

If English gentlemen, in influential stations, would but fairly exercise their good sense upon this subject, as they do upon other subjects ; if they would but candidly and dispassionately weigh the evidence upon the strength of which Christianity advances its claim ; if they would consider the two-fold evidence of simple history and corroborating fact, by which we are convinced of the reality and truth of any past events ; and that the events recorded in the Bible possess the combined authority of both.

Most of the events of past ages are received on the simple evidence of history as recorded in books. Some of them, however, possess the additional evidence of facts still before our eyes, in commemorations regularly repeated every year since the events took place.

For example, in the history of our own country, the battle of Hastings possesses only the former species of evidence. It is recorded in books only, and it is difficult to convey to ignorant uneducated minds an assurance that it took place. But the Gunpowder Treason possesses the corroborating evidence of facts still before our eyes, exhibited on every returning fifth of November, by a commemoration which was observed, of course for the first time the year after the event occurred, *which could never have been observed at all if the event had never occurred*, and the observation of which therefore from year to year, is a standing visible proof of the event. Of this highest character is the evidence for

the Scriptures, derived not only from the page of history, but corroborated by commemorations—Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the celebration of Christmas, of Good Friday, of Easter day—practices introduced at the time when the events occurred, *which never could have been introduced if the events had never occurred*, and which are, therefore, standing visible proofs of the events. Thus the events themselves recorded in the Bible are established as authentic, and then the *nature* of those events proves the immediate and supernatural agency of Almighty God himself.

If our legislators, in the exercise of the much-vaunted reason of these times, would fairly consider the mystery of providence, and the inevitable inadequacy of external nature to throw light upon itself. That the present aspect of God's dealings with our world is but a part, and a small part, of the whole subject. Taken by itself, it is unintelligible. The cause is two-fold,—the fall of man, and the forbearance of God. Within these limits every attainment of natural knowledge is bounded.

Nature does not tell the *whole* history of man, or reveal the *whole* character of God. Consequently the best judgment that can be derived from nature is partial; and must, therefore, with reference to the whole subject, be erroneous. Where, then, can we find adequate instruction? Only in the Bible. The Bible is supernatural, and explains the whole by revealing both the end and the beginning. It goes up higher than the fall of man, showing what

he was unfallen ; and it goes down lower than the forbearance of God, showing what he will be when his forbearance shall cease, and his righteous judgment begin. Suppose a great house, containing a vast, complicated, and perfect system of machinery. Suppose a reason to exist for suspending the *direct* work of the machine, while, nevertheless, the *matériel* must be kept in motion. Suppose a certain set of peculiar wheels, and beams, and pistons, and cylinders, constructed for the purpose of this suspension. Suppose that opposite this special part of the machinery there is a little window ; and suppose a band of inquirers into the nature and working, and results of the great engine, to come to that little window, and to have all their observations circumscribed within the limits of that narrow aperture. You have here a fair representation of the case of those who attempt, by observations confined to present providences, to ascertain the nature, working, and results of the dealings of the living God. The period of our history in which we now live is not only brief, but it does not belong to the *direct* working of God with immortal men. It resembles the suspension wheels. For the Lord Jesus Christ's sake there is an arrest of judgment, and God is waiting. The Bible is not confined to the little window. It gives an enlarged view on the right hand and on the left, explaining the everlasting design, and giving assurance of the everlasting results of the divine machinery.

If our honourable and right honourable gentle

men, instead of contemning, or affecting to contemn, serious religion as suited only to the weak and credulous, would compare the evidence by which they are practically convinced in things temporal, with the evidence abundantly supplied to them concerning things eternal ; the uncertainty of the best laid schemes for next session or next week, with the certainty of standing before the judgment-seat of Christ : beyond all question, the confession of Nicodemus would become the conclusion of their reasonings, “ We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him ; ” and this, in many instances at least, would lead to more serious inquiry, though for a time, perhaps, *at night* or in secret, in order to avoid the scoff of their less influenced associates.

If, instead of making the recess of the sabbath a period of busy preparation for their parliamentary career of the following week, they really made it a season of rest to their souls from the agitating whirl of party politics, glorifying God by depending upon his help to render the other days sufficient for their work—soon, very soon it would be manifest to the nation and to the world, that the extension of Christianity among the people had become so interesting to the legislature, that no difficulties in the way of adjusting the *mode* of procedure could long deter from some decided step. There would then be *a will*; and the case would present no exception to the truth of the proverb, there would

soon be *a way*. Excuses would no longer be sought for, nor attended to if suggested. They would be treated as all objections against steam navigation, railways, cheap publications, and cheap transmission of intelligence throughout the country, have been treated. When men become seriously convinced, and determinately in earnest, difficulties give way, like towstrings before the fire. Such churchmen would exact nothing for the sake of exacting; and such dissenters would refuse nothing for the sake of refusing. The propagation of the gospel would be paramount with both; and hundreds would acquiesce in a *mode* of doing it very different from the mode they would prefer *ceteris paribus*; but upon the whole vastly to be preferred to that dead lock inaction which paralyses all, while souls are perishing.

Are we to have a national establishment of the christian church any longer, or are we not? The question at issue has rapidly narrowed itself into the simplicity and brevity of this inquiry; and it should be seen and recognised at once, that, with the affirmative of this question, church extension stands identified,—church extension on a bold, liberal, national scale. It is vain in itself, and highly injurious in its consequences, to imagine that the established church can be *maintained*, without being *extended*. Yet this, unhappily, seems to be the opinion of many of the friends of the church. The following passage from a speech of the noble secretary for the colonies, in a late debate in the House

of Commons, will be in public recollection : “ When any public burden was proposed, whether of tithes or any other, it was always imposed equally on all the subjects of the crown, and it was upon that principle alone that an established church could be maintained, because an established church was assumed to be *for the common good of the whole,—that was the principle on which an established church could alone be asked for.* He, for one, would say, that he would be sorry to see the time when those who preached the gospel in this country would be obliged to look for support to the voluntary contributions of their congregations. He could understand, with regard to the lighter arts, the principle embodied in those lines of Dr. Johnson :—

‘ The drama’s laws the drama’s patrons give,
For those who live to please must please to live.’

But sorry would he be to hear that

‘ The pulpit’s laws the pulpit’s patrons give,
And those who live to preach must preach to live.’

Sorry indeed would he be, if those who filled the pulpits now filled by members of the established church, were to become claimants on the voluntary contributions of their congregations on the score of their being taking, eloquent, pleasing preachers.”

Most cordially do we agree with the noble lord, not only in his explicit statements with regard to the voluntary system, but also in the general principle which he lays down, as the only adequate and consistent basis for an established church. It is *for the common good of the whole.* On this

ground *alone* can it be justified. Exactly so. If it cease to be for the good *of the whole*, it cannot consistently continue to be at all. If its universality be given up, the principle of its existence is given up. Surely this manly declaration of the noble lord, made in the full foresight of the measure to be proposed by the hon. member for the university of Oxford, is well calculated to satisfy all, who can confide in his consistency, that the principle of church extension, extension to national dimensions, for the good of the whole, will be carried in the House of Commons without a division.

But, unhappily, many deceive themselves by saying, We will not consent to give up the established church ; and yet, inconsistently enough, they do give up the hope of additional and large grants from the state for church extension.

The effect is mischievous in a degree not generally contemplated. Such language enrols those who adopt it among the friends, in theory, of the national church ; while, practically, by yielding the point of national extension, they are forwarding in the most efficient, because least suspected, manner, the views and objects of the determined adversaries of the church. The ultimate object of our adversaries is, indeed, the total demolition of even the existing establishment. Their policy, however, is not to avow this broadly, lest they should rouse against them the strong prejudice (as they consider it) which as yet ranges the bulk of the population on the side of the church. Accordingly their present

demand is only, that the state should *let the matter alone*. They know full well, and we should know and consider carefully, that if the extent of the national establishment be stationary; while the population of the country is rapidly progressive, the establishment must soon cease to be national, and wear the aspect of a sect in a nation; the invidious aspect of a favoured sect; and then, the injustice of having done so much for it, is argued from the want of confidence in it which has shrunk from doing more. If it be but a sect which never could be for the good of the whole, why favour it more than any other sect in the nation? Why continue to sanction the prejudices and partiality of past ages when it was so favoured? But if it be the christian church, an ordinance of God in all ages, and good indeed for the whole; then why not keep it national in its extent, whatever objections individuals may urge against it? It is true that the objectors to church extension are now numerous; but it is equally true that they have become numerous because the church was not long since extended. And where is this to end? If the argument from numbers be of force now, it is a force which goes directly to increase itself; and before which the established church, and all the other free, because limited and defined institutions in the country, must progressively and rapidly disappear.

Supposing the enterprise to be seriously entertained, and a truly christian effort made upon a

large scale, to extend at least the humanising influences of the gospel throughout the increased and rapidly increasing population of the country ; it is of the first practical importance to bear in mind, that in order to render the scheme effectual, there must be *a subdivision of parishes*, in large towns and populous districts. Everything short of this will be found mere abortive palliation. Various attempts have been made at a legislative regulation of what is called the *district* system, as distinguished from the parochial. Act after act has been passed upon this subject since the 58 of Geo. III., but the vain attempt at grafting a semi-dissenting system upon the Church of England system has pervaded and weakened them all.

In venturing to express my views upon this subject, I am thoroughly conscious of the insignificance of my opinion, and therefore as far removed as can well be imagined from any disposition to dogmatise. But preparatory to occupying my present position, deliberately and carefully to form an opinion was my duty, and now freely and honestly, without fear or favour, to express it, is my privilege. If in anything it be erroneous, I shall be corrected ; and if in the reaction good be done, I shall have cause to give God thanks even for my honest mistake.

My conviction, at present, is, that the *district* as distinguished from the parochial system, is ineffectual, unjust, and oppressive.

(1.) It is *ineffectual*. The building of churches and school-rooms, and the appointment of clergy-

men to officiate therein, though an indispensable step towards a remedy, will not of itself reach the seat of the disease. To make them really beneficial as national churches, they must have *legal* parishes assigned to them. Without such assignment they can never penetrate the masses of the unreclaimed population. They are a sort of hovering voluntaryism, affording opportunities as they fly, but not alighting and fastening that they may press influences. They bring a certain power of attraction, varying with the popular gifts of the individual minister, to the surface of the mass; and occasionally cause the comparatively loose particles to be detached and to join them: but they leave the mass itself unbroken, in all the depth of its increasing corruption. Such district pastors, without parishes, have no *legal* right to go among the people; and their plans for missionary aggression, if not entirely approved of by the rector or vicar, may be legally controlled or thwarted. A consciousness of this hinders many valuable efforts which would otherwise be made; but to the trouble and unavoidable offence of which, in their beginnings, no clergyman will commit himself, if liable to be checked and turned out of his course before his arrangements can be expected to take effect. The labours, therefore, of such clergymen are confined almost exclusively to those who voluntarily attend their congregations. These are not generally, to any really important amount, collected from the classes whose destitution calls most loudly for chris-

tian interference. The dissolute, the drunken, the sabbath-breaker, are not found amongst these voluntary worshippers; but rather the unsettled, the capricious, the novelty-loving frequenters of neighbouring churches and chapels. The irreligious multitude can never be pervaded by any conceivable multiplication of such a system. To be effectual as a national blessing, each clergyman must be authorised, without interference, to enter the houses, and sit and talk by the fire-sides, and in the midst of the families of the people within certain boundaries; not on sufferance, and with the feeling of intruders, but as spiritual persons, whose *duty* to visit from house to house, teaching and preaching Jesus Christ, is still acknowledged (nay, and the performance of it sometimes demanded) even by those who never enter our churches. They, in return, must feel that they have a *claim* upon our services, in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity; irrespective altogether of voluntary attendance on our ministry.

It was supposed that the district system would prove sufficient for these purposes; but this supposition appears to be relinquished, and the church of England system, viz. parochial subdivision, again to claim the attention of the legislature. The 1 and 2 Victoria, c. 106, and the 2 and 3 Victoria, c. 49, amending previous statutes, give, I believe, unqualified powers to archbishops and bishops, to separate our large parishes, not into districts still dependent in some things upon the mother church,

but “into separate and distinct parishes, not in any wise subject to the control or interference of the rector, vicar, or minister of the mother church.” The remedy in this branch of the question being thus placed in the proper hands, let us hope that the practical application of it is at the door.

To urge it, I would observe, (2,) This district system is *unjust*. It proceeds upon the assumption, that the incumbent of the parish is physically unable to discharge the duties undertaken by him at his institution, or that, since his institution, have unexpectedly grown up around him. To remedy this sore evil, the district system steps in, and its ostensible operation is to divide the labour and responsibility amongst the clergy of the mother church, and those churches which are built within the parish. This seems fair, but its details will not bear the test of candid, disinterested investigation. Privileges and emoluments are tenaciously held by the parish church, not merely under the idea of respecting vested rights, (against which, if fully and impartially applied, there is no complaint,) but with the avowed determination that the parochial successor shall continue to be the comparative sine-curist, and the district clergy continue the unprivileged and unrequited labourers?

If it be asked, what privileges are referred to? the answer is, Every right-minded clergyman considers it a privilege to be able to discharge every part of his ministry—to baptize, to solemnise holy matrimony, and not only in the private chamber, but

also in the burial service of the church, to cheer the hearts of mourning relatives and friends, while he points to our glorious resurrection in the likeness of our returning Lord. These touching parts of his ministrations, by which pastor and people are more closely and affectionately united, are practically hindered by the operation of the district system. The poor cannot afford to pay the double fees, commonly, in many cases, necessarily charged in district churches, one half of which is claimed by the parish church ; and thus, after all a clergyman's labours, and watchings, and cares, and anxieties, this system deprives him of the sympathising privileges, while it lays upon him the burdens and responsibilities, of a parochial minister.

(3.) And thus it follows, further, that the district system is *oppressive*.

If a clergyman, to whom one of these districts is assigned, strongly feeling the injustice of the system, refuse to burden himself with duties, for the discharge of which another is paid ; and to undergo anxieties from the sweetening sympathies of which he is debarred ; immediately he is accused, by an undiscerning multitude, unacquainted with [all the facts of the case, as selfishly withdrawing from parochial visitation ; and thus he encounters the painful temptation of being driven to exculpate himself by an exposure of the evil working of the system to which he belongs. And now, legal oppression superadds its weight to popular censure. Previous to last year, clergymen were at liberty to

refuse those districts. As the law now stands, they are deprived of that refuge. By the 2nd and 3rd Vict. c. 30, it is enacted, that if any spiritual person shall refuse or neglect to discharge the duties apportioned to him, he shall be proceeded against “in the same manner as the bishop is empowered to proceed in case of a spiritual person, by reason of whose negligence the ecclesiastical duties of his benefice are inadequately performed.”

There are various modifications of this system in various parts of the kingdom, differing considerably one from another in the species and amount of hardship sustained, but everywhere exhibiting an anomaly, and inflicting some measure of injury.

With the most intense earnestness we would renew our appeal to our archbishops and bishops, to supersede this district system, this mockery of our ecclesiastical distress, by an efficient and immediate subdivision of *parishes*.

I have said *immediate*, in the full foresight of the loud and quick rejoinder, **VESTED RIGHTS**. I have considered that subject, and venture, with all respect, to offer a few observations under two heads: first as to the *right*, and second as to the *remedy*.

First. Here is a parish, with its church, and its incumbent, and its population of two thousand souls. Now for the vested rights. In the incumbent are vested certain rights, including privileges and emoluments of various descriptions. And is that all? By no means. In the population also are vested certain rights, including congregational

instruction and worship, and private pastoral superintendence. These are correlative to the rights of the incumbent; and so long as *all* the vested rights in the parish are respected, all is well. But behold, amongst and around the original flock of two thousand, are born fifty thousand Englishmen. Have these no vested rights? Are these ecclesiastical outlaws, in virtue of an arrangement made before they were born? Nay, worse than outlaws, for on the side of payment they are still within the law: all bound to minister to the vested rights of the incumbent, as incumbent; although it has become physically impossible for him to minister to their vested rights as Englishmen. I take my stand on such a parish, and plead for the birth-right of fifty thousand Englishmen; and I say the vested right of every one of them is the pastoral superintendence of a parochial minister. But this must be attended with incalculable expense! Well, if the miner or manufacturer, in whose employment, and for whose immediate, though not exclusive, benefit, these thousands come into the world, refuse to provide them their national birthright; it is the duty, the bounden duty, of a paternal government to step in on their behalf. And if the liberty of the subject, and the rights of private property, render it impossible specially to tax the local miner or manufacturer; it ought to be remembered that the whole nation, as such, is benefited by that mining and manufacturing; and therefore the whole nation, as such, should be charged with the needful

provision for securing his birthright to every Englishman ; his best birthright, which contemplates not only the privileges of his residence in England, but also the preparation for his dwelling-place in eternity. What ! shall the government of christian England provide gaols for Englishmen who are thieves, and hulks for Englishmen who are felons, and gallows for Englishmen who are murderers ; and shall they not provide churches and pastors for Englishmen who are industrious and patient labourers in mines and factories ? What language, let me ask, could adequately characterise the refinement of barbarity in the father of a large family, who liberally and largely provided diversities of punishments for the offences of his children, while he refused to provide for the only species of education by which they could be effectually won from the commission of such offences ?

Second. This leads to the remedy. Let the vested rights of the existing incumbent be respected by all means : but how ? By keeping fifty thousand of his fellow-subjects waiting for *their* rights till he dies ? No. By subjecting five or six of his fellow-clergymen to the combined tread-mill and pillory of the district system ? O, no. How then ? First break up his parish into two, three, four, or ten, as the case may require ; make each of these a *bonâ fide* parish in all dues, and fees, and privileges, that every Englishman in the country may have his birthright ; and then, let a paternal government say to the incumbent, For the benefit of

our national family, you, as an individual, have been deprived of a portion of that income on which you had reason to calculate during your lifetime ; and with consequent reference to which, you may have arranged your expenditure, personal, domestic, and relative. As we could not see our people wronged for the maintenance of your income ; so neither can we see you wronged by their supply ; and therefore, having ascertained the amount of the difference between the income of what *was* your parish, and the income of what is now your parish, we give you an annuity to that amount out of the national treasury.

Looking practically at matters as they stand, considering the number of parishes where the incumbents have incomes too small for pecuniary subdivision, while the population has increased by tens of thousands, and demands a multiplicity of parochial subdivision ; it is evident that to carry out with any effect the plan here suggested, would require an enormous increase of funds. It is equally evident, I think, that in the hands of a government, really willing to christianize (as far as possible) the whole country ; there is no hindrance in the way of such a plan, except the want of funds.

But where is the money to come from, first for the building of the required number of new parish churches, then for the annuities of bereaved incumbents, and, worst of all, in the numerous instances where the incomes of incumbents are already too small, for the endowment, the indispensable endowment, of all the new churches ?

There are four obvious sources from whence funds should be obtained ; the appropriators, the impropriators, voluntary contributions, and national grants. I can do little more than enumerate ; but I think, before we can urge our claim upon the lay impropriators to restore to the church any portion of her alienated property, we should look to the clerical and university appropriators, and urge them to show a good example. Not, indeed, that their delay can justify a continuance of the alienation of church property in the hands of laymen. The reforms should proceed *pari passu*, and vigorous measures should be proposed by friends personally interested, not by enemies.

Burn, under the head of *appropriation*, says, “The distinction between ‘appropriation’ and ‘impropriation’ which has prevailed in common use subsequently to the dissolution of religious houses, has been, that an interest of this kind, when in the hands of a spiritual person, is called by the former, and when in those of a layman, by the latter name.” And quoting from *Haggard’s Reports*, (Duke of Portland *v.* Bingham,) he says, “Appropriations are an abuse which took their rise in the darker ages.”

It appears from the Reports of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, that there are in England and Wales about 4,439 appropriations and impropriations. The appropriators, comprehending the universities under this name, amount to about 1,806. In the diocese of Canterbury there are 114 appro-

priators and 50 impropriators. In Norwich, 119 appropriations and 207 impropriations. In Lincoln, 154 appropriations, and 253 impropriations. In York, 197 appropriations, and 273 impropriations.

If the attention of the Commissioners were turned from the comparative bagatelle of cathedral spoliation, to an efficient appropriate and impropriate reform ; they would confer a real and lasting benefit upon the nation.

I presume not to suggest proportions of restitution beyond the general statement, that the value of the benefices in question has generally increased while the population also has increased ; and that as the property was charged with a measure of spiritual provision for the existing population, its increased value should be now charged with a measure of spiritual provision proportioned to the increased population.

If bills adopting a line, which only present owners can gracefully adopt, were introduced to the House of Lords by some bishop who is also an appropriate rector of a valuable parish, now served by a poor vicar ; and by some noble impropriator, whose personal sacrifice in the measure would give evidence of the sincerity of his patriotism : such exhibitions would not be lost upon the nation. The people could, and would, appreciate them : and the times demand them.

We have no sympathy with those who would wholly break up our ecclesiastical machinery, because defects and abuses have been detected in the

working of it ; and quite as little with those, on the other side, who would degrade the sacred mantle of the system itself into a covering for the varnished defect, or consecrated abuse. If there be a worm in the gourd, the fond sparer of the worm is the guilty destroyer of the gourd. We say, by all the value you set upon the rich, wide-spreading plant, with all the blessings and comforts of its refreshing and cherishing shelter, kill the worm. Spontaneous and efficient reform in time is the only effectual guard against hasty and headlong revolution at last.

Under the head of voluntary contributions, also, it would be gratifying to the heart of any christian patriot to see churchmen, I mean especially the clergy, lead the way ; not merely by precarious and desultory gifts, but by voluntary taxation. Who could appreciate the effect upon the country of a bill introduced to the House of Commons, not by Mr. Baines, but by Sir Robert Inglis, and backed by the beneficed clergy of the kingdom, whose clerical incomes reach or exceed three hundred pounds per annum, praying for a tax upon all such clerical property, (two and a half, three, or five per cent. per annum,) to create a fund for the endowment of more parish churches ? Who will venture to guess to what extent of private liberality in the nation such conduct would lead ? And after these things were done, or honestly set about ; after appropriate and impropriate reform ; after such a proposal as is here intimated, for a tax upon clerical property for parochial endowment ; what

government, let me ask, or what House of Commons could, for a session, or half a session, resist the demand (overflowing in national enthusiasm) which would be made upon them, effectually and speedily, to *renationalise* the established church? to do it speedily; and so effectually, that every Englishman, to the depth of the most abject cellar, and the height of the most squalid garret, would enjoy that best birthright of an Englishman, the pastoral superintendence of a parish clergyman?

I do not say that national grants for church extension should await these preliminary steps; but I do venture to say that, after such steps taken, national grants could be withheld no longer. And I venture to say, further, that, without a large revival of the tone of public feeling which would lead to such steps, money alone would not attain our object. No amount of money could raise the moral and religious feeling of the country: but money, elicited by an already raised tone of feeling, manifesting itself by sacrifices of genuine, churchman-like, primitive, christian liberality; would, so far as human instrumentality could, secure our glorious evangelising design. Then would we approximate to that state of things, of which Dr. Chalmers has sketched so lovely a picture, in the overflowing of his benevolent heart; that his antagonist Doctor Wardlaw relents as he beholds it, confesses a conscious misgiving, and pleads guilty to a rising hesitancy in venturing to assail it.

“And really he sketches so fine a picture”—I

rejoice in this tribute to Chalmers from a generous adversary,—“he sketches so fine a picture, that one scarcely wonders at his getting enamoured of it, for it is in danger of bewitching one’s self.”

“What can well be more captivating than a christian government, solicitous for the moral and spiritual interests of all the people; a complete subdivision of town and country into sections of manageable extent; a pious, zealous, praying, working minister in every section ; every family visited ; every individual taught ; every soul adequately cared for ; and ‘a church-going and a church-loving people,’ as the happy result of such superintendence, ‘handed down to the minister of the next generation !’ And when we add to this scene of moral and spiritual beauty, what meets the eye and the ear, in the picturesque effect of the parish church, and the graceful parsonage, and the holy resting-place of the dead,

“ Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,”

and “the sound of the church-going bell,”—which, with many more items in the external scenery of religion, have been introduced to aid the fascination—what is external being carefully made to summon up before the mind all the higher associations of godliness and virtue, and of personal and domestic order and happiness ;—is it any wonder that, piety and benevolence and taste being thus conjointly appealed to, the mind should at times be conscious of a misgiving, and of a rising hesitancy

in venturing to assail so fine a combination of national and spiritual loveliness?"¹

Why then assail it? Why do violence to the *conscious misgiving* of an ingenuous mind? Why lay rude hands upon the tender *rising hesitancy* of almost a churchman; and check the benevolence of the heart, into the difficult, because unnatural, coldness of a stern voluntary? Let us not despair, but that in a more favourable hour of triumphant conscience, when misgiving shall ripen into conviction, and hesitancy shall give place to resolve, we shall have, with us, the matured understanding, the commanding talents, and the fascinating eloquence of Dr. Wardlaw.

One word! for which I feel I shall at once have more than your excuse. Englishmen! English churchmen! engaged in the noble and ennobling enterprise of extending into true national dimensions your scriptural establishment; roused and animated, combined and combining, into a growing phalanx for defence, for reform, for improved efficiency:—

Englishmen, remember Ireland! To your misjudging forefathers she owes the introduction, the extension, the establishment of popery. English churchmen, remember Ireland!—to you she looks, not for the desertion, but for the protection, the encouragement, the enlargement, the establishment of her Protestantism. Leave her not with the name only, the mockery of a protestant established

¹ Lectures, p. 214.

church ; but while you maintain legislative guards for your own liberties against papal aggression ; shelter your sister, and not only shelter her Protestant outworks, but aim at her true assimilation to yourselves, by the propagation of that glorious gospel which has delivered you from priestly tyranny, and is able to deliver them. Multiply, O multiply, the gracious appliances of British Christianity : give her Irish Bibles, give her scriptural schools, give her evangelical missionaries. In the name of Him who snatched yourselves from the grasp of antichrist, as brands out of the fire ; of Him who raised your population from the crouching slavery of the confessional, at the knee of a mortal man ; to the holy liberty wherewith the Son of the living God maketh his people free—O ! have mercy, christian mercy ; and therein, true, holy, everlasting, godlike “ justice for Ireland.”

LECTURE VI.

PRACTICAL EFFICIENCY OF THE CHURCH HINDERED BY DEFECTS IN THE WORKING—FALSE FRIENDSHIP TO ATTEMPT TO HIDE REAL FAULTS—UNFAIR ADVANTAGE TAKEN OF CANDOUR, NO GOOD REASON AGAINST ITS EXERCISE—TRUE TEMPER OF CHRISTIAN REPROOF—SOME DEFECTS IN THE WORKING OF OUR NATIONAL CHURCH ENUMERATED, AND REMEDIES SUGGESTED—CONCLUDING APPEAL: THE INSEPARABLE CONNEXION BETWEEN RELIGION AND POLITICS, MIND AND BODY, CAUSE AND EFFECT—EXCEEDING URGENCY OF THIS SUBJECT—THE PROSPERITY, THE PEACE, THE FREE INSTITUTIONS, THE MISSIONARY USEFULNESS OF THE COUNTRY, AS WELL AS THE SALVATION OF IMMORTAL SOULS, ALL AT STAKE.

THE circumstances which impede the efficiency of our national church establishment, with reference to its working, involve considerations of great delicacy and difficulty. There are persons whose attachment to our church approaches to the idolatrous. In her general excellence, and their long established habits of thinking and feeling towards her; they seem to forget that there is any thing human in her arrangements, or any consequent risk

of mistake, or even error in judgment, to be found in any department of her polity. Of course they can exercise but little patience towards any deviation from unqualified defence, and unmixed eulogium.

To admit that there is anything defective, anything inefficient, anything requiring reformation in our church, sounds to such persons little less than profane.

I have no sympathy with such prepossessions. Cordially attached to our venerable mother I am indeed ; and for this among other reasons, that she nowhere claims infallibility for anything except the word of God ; but, on the contrary, plainly declares that church after church “ hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith.” Jerusalem, Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome have erred ; though not all to the same extent : and there is no charter of entire exemption from error, for England ; neither is it the part of real self-denying friendship to be blind or silent towards actually existing faults.

I am well aware of the malicious enmity with which any acknowledgment of error is seized upon and misrepresented. I know the unfair advantage which factious opponents never fail to take of candour. Instead of giving us credit for honesty enough to confess a fault where we see it, notwithstanding the general excellence, and our general defence, of the system ; they disingenuously lay hold of our confession as if it were the only thing we had said, and fasten undivided attention upon

the admitted evil ; to the wilful and dishonest neglect of all the unanswerable good. Still, we must not be driven to an uncandid course ourselves, because we are uncandidly treated by others. Honesty is christian duty at the outset, as well as the best policy in the end. There is, however, a vast difference between honest reproof (prompted by faithfulness and uttered in sorrow) and that virulence of invective which betrays a cordiality in denunciation.

It is truly painful, for their own sakes, to inspect the various ranks which are drawn up in hostile array against our church ; and to look in vain, in any section of them, for the true spirit of scriptural reformers. They present the aspect of reckless levellers, rather than of sympathising protesters. Their zeal seems to partake more of the ostentatious madness of Jehu, than of the meek and weeping expostulations of Jeremiah. Their language remarkably harmonises with that which is ascribed to the Ishmaelites, the Moabites, and the Hagarens, Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, when they were confederate against Zion. “ Down with it,” said they, “ down to the ground.” How widely different was the animating protestation of the faithful servant of God, who *really felt* and sincerely mourned over the existing abuses ! Divinely commissioned to expose the corruptions of the Jewish church, and to proclaim the coming judgments of the Lord God of Israel ; yet hear how he minglest compassion with his faithful protests ! “ For the hurt of the daughter

of my people am I hurt : I am black ; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead ? Is there no physician to heal ? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered ? O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people !”

Distinguishing between the people and their misconduct, he still calls them “*my* people.” Separating their national institutions from the practical abuses by which their efficiency was impeded, and their God offended ; he still speaks of healing, he still sighs for balm, and calls for a physician. This is the more remarkable, because God had distinctly declared to him the inevitable destruction of that church and nation ; but as the time had not been told, and as there is nothing in faithfulness to God, or confidence in his predictions of national calamities, to interfere with the tenderness of true religious patriotism ; Jeremiah could be a faithful reprobator, without desiring the evil day, without denouncing, as if he had pleasure in, the calamity.

Saint Paul also, even after he knew by the infallible inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that his nation was to be cast off as a disobedient and gainsaying people ; was filled with tender affectionate sorrow for his brethren, and fervent anxiety to save some. And need I refer to a greater than Jeremiah or Paul, to our great Exemplar, when proclaiming the ruin,

now inevitable, of the holy city? Did he withhold reproof? Witness his solemn and reiterated *woes* upon the scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! But did he exult over their hypocrisy, or manifest satisfaction in the righteous vengeance ready to fall upon the city? Nay, when he beheld her, he wept, and exclaimed with incomparable tenderness, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killst the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! O that thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace!"

It were well—how well!—if those who have set themselves in array against such a system as is supplied by our church, would learn the lesson that should be taught them by these and similar instances, and weep over the painful necessity, even when they feel themselves conscientiously compelled to the christian duty of finding fault! How touchingly powerful are expostulations against evil practices, when evidently wrung from an affectionate heart, which loves the truth, which loves the opportunities afforded by the church for proclaiming the truth, and is constrained to see and hate the abuse, because of the hindrance that it presents to the propagation of the truth he loves!

It is in such a spirit, faithful and affectionate, candid and kind, that I desire to offer the following

observations on what I believe to be some of the chief hindrances to the practical efficiency of our church, considered in her actual working.

1. And, first, I would call attention to the too common, and, under existing circumstances, I fear I might truly add inevitable, mode of administering the ordinance of baptism in our parish churches, especially in large towns, and populous manufacturing or mining villages.

The numbers to be baptized in the same church render the true and orderly method of having the ordinance performed during divine service, utterly impracticable. This has led to the habitual disuse of the practice for many years—a disuse which has become infectious, extending to parishes where the population is not such as to supply any excuse; and now any attempt to re-introduce the right practice is felt by the congregations to be an intolerable intrusion, protracting the service beyond all endurance. Some hopeful attempts at reformation in this matter have been frustrated by this repugnance on the part of the congregation, when strenuously urged upon the clergyman; and thus, this fundamental ordinance of Christianity, and as such of our entire ecclesiastical polity, is driven into a corner, dislodged from its right station of prominence, of interest, and influence.

Private baptisms are multiplied. And crowds of sponsors with infants are collected, at stated hours on week days, into the parish church; where, with much inevitable confusion, and consequent want of

reverence and solemnity, the baptismal service degenerates, from the highest exercise of the church's faith, into a lifeless and superstitious form. Instead of awakened sympathies and believing prayer, calling down blessings from heaven, and entering with tender holy confidence into the thanksgivings of the church ; we have, at best, no more than the cold correctness of official repetition : the essential and fervent spirituality of the service itself tending but to exhibit, in more glaring and painful contrast, the unimpressive, and to all appearance the unbelieving, manner of its administration.

The handle of objection afforded to our enemies by this, as well as the amount of dissatisfaction and distrust generated in the minds of many of our own members and friends, it would be difficult to estimate. It is a practical grievance loudly demanding effectual redress. The remedy is not to be found in the present system of district churches, however multiplied, unless they are made parochially responsible for certain boundaries. At present they subtract from the parish churches but an inconsiderable fraction of the unmanageable mass. If their ministers enforce order, and decency, and publicity in the baptismal service, only a small number of even their own congregations will submit to the long neglected regulations, and bring their children. The remainder go to swell the tide, as above described, at the parish church ; and thus to add to the utter hopelessness of the parochial clergy, who cannot by possibility have personal ac-

quaintance with the parents, or the persons presented as sponsors; or know whether the latter be communicants, or otherwise.

The remedy is to be found only in *parochial* subdivision, giving a *right* to the inhabitants of certain specified districts to go for baptism to a certain church; and a consequent right to the ministers of every other church to refuse to receive them. This, sufficiently carried out, that is, such parochial subdivisions sufficiently multiplied to reduce the population in each within practicable limits, would enable each minister, by inviting accommodating arrangements among his people, to have all, or very nearly all, the baptisms of his parish performed in the solemnity of public worship, without prolonging the usual service, more frequently than once or twice in a month.

2. Another hindrance in the way of our complete practical efficiency may be traced to a few important passages, of equivocal import, in some of our occasional services. I am not about to enter into any theological discussions as to the propriety or otherwise of the feelings of dissatisfaction and uncertainty occasioned by the passages in question. I speak now to the matter of fact. It is undeniable that there are passages in some of our services, and those of vital and fundamental importance, which are variously understood by the clergy; and the effect of which upon the most conscientious and exemplary of the laity, is highly detrimental to the best interests of the church.

I do not say that it makes them enemies. I do not say that it hinders them from being still friends and supporters. But there are degrees in the cordiality of friendship, and in the unhesitating vigour of support: and I do say, because I have seen and known, that the influence to which I now allude damps the ardour of many; producing at times a secret misgiving within, and a consequent occasional wavering as to prominent and vigorous measures to be adopted without. Unable to give a brief and satisfactory answer when challenged on certain points; many of our friends, from whom we might expect the most distinguished advocacy, shrink from the occupation of a position calculated to provoke the taunting inquiry. The evil consequences of this hesitation are great and numerous. The advocacy of such friends is confined to vague generalities. The practical turning point of the question is avoided. We know that a slight, a very slight tremour in the hand that holds the bow, will so affect the course of the arrow, as to drive it hopelessly wide of the mark.

To apply a remedy here, to minister to this secret tremour so as to remove its cause, and give steadied confidence to our friends in their several advocacies of our general system—this would be to strengthen beyond calculation the forces of the church. I am tremblingly alive to the delicacy of the ground on which I have now ventured to tread. I have surveyed the hosts of armed opponents, ready on every side to be roused to active hostilities

by the slightest attempt at the addition, omission, or alteration of even a single word in our venerated ritual. I am thoroughly convinced that at this moment, no proposal, even of inspired wisdom if we could have it, would secure unanimity of adoption and give entire satisfaction to all parties. Nevertheless, strong in the consciousness of honest attachment, deeply feeling the necessity of some movement in this matter, if we are to be prepared for the gathering conflict ; and believing that true christian love, however it may cause momentary pain, can never give, to christian brethren, permanent offence ; I will suggest what has occurred to me, and scatter it from this place, as a seed, either to fructify or to decay, as seemeth best to our heavenly Father. The suggestion which I venture to make has this advantage, that it would not erase a word, nor add a word, nor alter a word, in any of our services ; and yet, if introduced by the proper and competent authorities, it would gladden many a heart that trembles, and strengthen many a hand that hangs down, among conscientious and devoted churchmen.

It is simply this ; that the passages referred to as they stand in our services be placed by authority between brackets, and the clergy authorised to read or not to read those bracketed clauses, according to their varying judgment and convictions. The consequence would be, that no change at all would take place in the practice of some of the clergy. They would read on all occasions, as they do now,

the entire service as it stands. Others would avail themselves of the conceded option, and omit the bracketed passages, or some of them. And many, perhaps, would read or not read the passages in question, according to the varying circumstances of the particular case. Neither would our uniformity sustain any serious injury thereby. Already we are in the practice of quite as great an amount of deviation from rigid uniformity, grounded upon a similar liberty of choice. Of the opening sentences of our public service, the officiating minister may read only one, and any one he pleases, out of eleven, or he may read all the eleven, or any varying portion of the eleven, according to his preference on any particular occasion. Also there are certain collects which may or may not be added, in reading the accustomed service, at the option of the clergyman; or as the Rubrick expresses it—"the same may be said also as often as occasion shall serve after the collects either of morning or evening prayer, communion, or litany, *by the discretion of the minister.*"

In point of fact, varieties do now occur in the reading of our services, at different times, and by different ministers, to the extent of the introduction or omission of whole sentences, nay of entire prayers, and yet no want of uniformity is felt. So it would be, in the case now suggested. No congregation would be in the least degree disturbed: no clergyman who prefers the entire services as they now stand would be deprived of one valued

expression ; while many would be relieved by the option ; and a vast accession of cordiality in support from the religious laity would be gained, by the testimony thus borne to the difference between prescribing as indispensable, and suggesting as preferable.

I do not feel this to be the time or place for any attempt to specify the particular passages which it might be wise so to mark, still less would it be convenient here to enter into the reasons which might be assigned for such selection. But I may here express my anxious hope that this matter will be taken into serious consideration in the proper quarter, and adjusted wisely in the light of matured experience and observation.

3. Another cause of comparatively limited efficiency in our church, will be found in the want of adequate training in candidates for the ministry.

A collegiate education, as commonly conducted, is not enough. It may indeed qualify for an examination of the original Scriptures ; for demonstrations of the genuineness, authenticity, and consequently inspiration of the sacred canon ; for guarding against crude novelties in doctrine, or vulgarities in composition ; for appreciating the blessings inseparable from subordination, and the consequent privilege to the Christian, of sacrificing gladly all the eccentricities of individual liberty, at the shrine of public order.

These are invaluable qualifications. Nothing

can be more remote from my intention, than to express or imply the slightest disparagement of them.

But a clergyman may be possessed of all these in an eminent degree, as many of our clergy are, and yet be fatally deficient in other respects not less necessary for an adequate discharge of the ministerial office. His acquirements may be vast and various, while his powers of instruction may never have been brought under cultivation. Doubtless to be himself in possession of the necessary knowledge is the first thing; and yet, if he possess not the capacity of communicating it to others: however excellent he may be as a Christian, and however valuable he may prove eventually as an author, he will, to the mass of living men around him, be comparatively useless as a minister.

The position of a clergyman in a mixed population is one of no ordinary difficulty. He has often the very extreme characters of the community to deal with, in the same congregation: the most enlightened and the most ignorant; the most moral and the most profligate; the most anxious about their souls, and the most stupidly careless. It is no easy matter to be efficient on the one side, without being repulsive on the other. The English character is reserved. There is among educated English churchmen generally, a nice sense of correctness, and propriety, and order; and, moreover, an instinctive shrinking from anything like exaggeration or stage effect, and an unwillingness to incur needless

publicity or observation. Ordinary circumstances will not induce such men to exert their full powers. An apprehension of affecting to be what they are not, keeps them back from a vigorous manifestation of what they really are. There can be no question that the characteristic of the public ministrations of our church in England, is rather defect than excess ; rather classical correctness, than popular efficiency ; rather the edification of the educated, than the reclaiming of the ignorant.

We are exhorted by an apostle to make *full proof* of our ministry, and reminded that we are debtors not to the Greek only, but to the barbarian also ; to the wise, and to the unwise. But here is the difficulty. In order to arouse the careless, and interest the unwilling, energetic measures and words are indispensable. But, in the exercise of energy, there is a liability to forget gracefulness, and thus to expose the effort made for one part of the population to the ridicule of another. Such ridicule is carefully to be avoided, not on account of the clergyman ridiculed, (he may easily bear it,) but on account of the people who are thus supplied with a handle, or, at least, what is frequently used as a handle, against religion. It is not enough to say that this is unreasonable in them ; we must avoid, as far as lieth in us, even the appearance of evil, and endeavour, if possible, to silence prejudice as well as satisfy reason.

To be at once energetic and graceful, demands much strength, and much self-possession, and much

practice, and much knowledge : knowledge not of books only, but of men also. “Let no man *despise thee*,” is an apostolical exhortation to a minister of the church ; and, correspondingly, a part of his description is, “not a novice.” Men of the world must be made to feel that the ministers of the church know them and their pursuits, their difficulties and temptations. Practical religion must be exhibited, not as a devotional abstraction, incompatible with the active duties of life, but as a practicable thing in every lawful calling, however harassing or engrossing its avocations may be. The age demands talent in every department ; and, while we most cordially agree in the opinion lately expressed in his place in parliament by one of her Majesty’s ministers, that the clergy of the church should not be supported merely because they are “ popular, eloquent, and plausible preachers ;” we cannot but feel, at the same time, that, if unwillingness on the part of the outstanding population be a good practical argument in favour of endowments for the church ; it is equally so for the highest possible cultivation of what shall be popularly effective in the minister.

No one who has given even a passing attention to the habits and feelings of our people can doubt of the immense effect of a ready and natural elocution ; yet how little attention is paid to a right training for its acquirement. Looking at the ministrations of the church practically, and in detail ; following them from the pulpit to the school-room ; from the catechetical lecture, to the chamber

of sickness ; from the instruction and consolation of the dying poor, to the kind but dignified reproof of the careless, and, frequently, half-intoxicated, bystanders ; from the abode of squalid misery to the parlour of worldly-minded avarice, fortified by incipient, perhaps confirmed, scepticism ; or the drawing-room of piety on the one hand, or vanity on the other : from all these to the platform for the propagation of christian knowledge, or exposure of ante-christian error, by means of bibles, missionaries, schools, prayer-books, homilies, and tracts ;—in whatever department of his labours you contemplate the minister of the church, it would be difficult to estimate the advantage that might, under the divine blessing, be derived from elocution classes in our universities ; where, under the management of competent professors, our young men might be trained in recitation, both of selections from standard authors, and of their own compositions on set subjects. Conversational debatings, under the same watchful and authoritative control, might be most profitably introduced ; and the students might be practised in a ready reply to objections, advanced for the purpose by the professor.

Instead of superseding any part of the present process, this might be added to it all ; and if candidates for orders were thereby delayed a year, or even two years, there would be more than compensation for the delay in the increased competence for the work. Many of the difficulties, under the unforeseen pressure of which young clergymen

too frequently despond, might be anticipated, and completely overcome ; and so a set of armed men, ready for the christian field amidst our swarming population, might be presented for ordination to all our bishops. At this moment, in every neighbourhood where funds have been collected, and trustees appointed, and new churches undertaken, the urgent question is, where are we to find *competent* ministers ? The experience of existing churches, with their respective ministers, points out the nature of the required competence.

4. This leads to the mention of another cause of the limited efficiency of our church, viz. the standard of personal deportment which some of the clergy deem sufficiently strict and exemplary.

That the teachers of religion should be personally patterns of the practice of it,—in Scripture phrase, “ensamples to the flock,”—is a point on which the universal sense of mankind seems to respond to the apostolical exhortation. It is the common feeling that each of the ministers of the church should be able to say, meekly indeed, yet without fear of retort or ridicule, “ Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” This is pressed, with no small degree of urgency, in the ordination service of our church :—

“ Forasmuch then, as your office is both of so great excellency, and of so great difficulty, ye see with how great care and study ye ought to apply yourselves, as well that ye may show yourselves dutiful and thankful unto that Lord, who hath

placed you in so high a dignity ; as also to beware, that neither you yourselves offend, nor be occasion that others offend. Howbeit, ye cannot have a mind and will thereto of yourselves ; for that will and ability is given of God alone : therefore, ye ought, and have need, to pray earnestly for his Holy Spirit. And seeing that you cannot by any other means compass the doing of so weighty a work, pertaining to the salvation of man, but with doctrine and exhortation taken out of the holy Scriptures, and with a life agreeable to the same ; consider how studious ye ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures, and in framing the manners both of yourselves, and of them that specially pertain unto you, according to the rule of the same Scriptures : and for this self-same cause, how ye ought to forsake and set aside (as much as you may) all worldly cares and studies.

“ We have good hope that you have well weighed and pondered these things with yourselves long before this time ; and that you have clearly determined, by God’s grace, to *give yourselves wholly to this office*, whereunto it hath pleased God to call you : so that, as much as lieth in you, you will apply yourselves wholly to this one thing, and draw all your cares and studies this way ; and that you will continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost ; that, by daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures, ye may wax riper and stronger in your ministry ; and

that ye may so endeavour yourselves, from time to time, to sanctify the lives of you and yours, and to fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ, that ye may be wholesome and godly examples and patterns for the people to follow."

Now whatever may be said in extenuation of the time-wasting public amusements of society; of the quiet domestic or social card-table; of the harmless occupations of farming or gardening; or of the advantages to science or literature derived from the researches or editorial criticisms of clergymen: it is very obvious, that men addicted to such pursuits can never so control the feelings (the prejudices if you will) of mankind, as to be thoroughly effective in the work of the ministry. Their soundest expositions of doctrine, and most earnest exhortations to the performance of those christian duties which they themselves practise, are neutralized by the intruding remembrance of the christian devotedness which they do not practise, and the painful sense of inconsistency inseparable therefrom. In the estimation of the lower classes of society, especially with reference to those conversational controversies into which churchmen of those classes are perpetually drawn by dissenters; any questionable practices notorious in a clergyman are prejudicial, in a degree not easily imagined, to the best interests of the church. For some years I have been habitually cognizant of such controversies; and the assaults which our poor friends are least able to withstand, are the dissenters' appeals to the clergyman at the

card-table, or in the ball-room ; the theatre, and the race-course.

This may sound a small matter, too small for introduction in this place ; but my matured conviction is, that, amongst those masses of the community whose good we have mainly in view ; the thousands who are influenced by objects of sense more than they can be by abstract arguments ; and who judge and will continue to judge and feel concerning the church more from what is visible in her ministers, than from what is essential in herself ; this is a very great and grave matter.

It is not easy to find a remedy, unless the subject were deemed of sufficient consequence to induce special episcopal prohibitions ; on the truly apostolical ground of enlarged charity towards the weak demanding restrictions of individual liberty in the strong. Granting the practices in question not to be intrinsically sinful, it will not be pretended that they are *duties*. The utmost that their warmest defenders will venture to plead is, that they are indifferent. But an apostle has said concerning such things, “ But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol’s temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols ; and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died ? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and

wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." (1 Cor. viii. 9—13.)

5. Another cause of limited practical efficacy in the working of the church, is to be traced to the inadequacy of the incomes of so many of the clergy, both incumbents and curates.

Many incumbents of populous parishes are wholly unable to pay a curate's salary. The seasonable benevolence of voluntary societies, in aid of such pastors, has supplied a few of them with the necessary funds to procure the assistance of a brother clergyman in the work. But this is precarious, and wholly inadequate to meet the exigencies of the case. It is not, however, a deficiency of numbers alone that we have to deplore; but a deficiency of means for the support of those we have. According to the ecclesiastical revenue inquiry, made nine years ago, the total number of benefices in England and Wales is 10,718. Of these, 297 are under the annual value of 50*l.*; 1629, under the annual value of 100*l.*; and 4935, under the annual value of 300*l.* One of the disastrous effects of this is, that not curates only, but incumbents themselves, are driven to the necessity of undertaking some other employment, in addition to their sacred calling. The most usual resort is to the education of a few young men, whether in a school or as private pupils. By this their usefulness, as clergymen, is reduced to the dwarfish dimensions of mere Sunday congregation

alists. They read the service of the church, and preach in the pulpit, but there ends their clerical work (unless specially sent for by some sick person) until the following Sunday. They cannot absent themselves from the work of a tutor so as to do daily the work of an evangelist in the cellars and garrets, by-streets, and lanes of our cities and overgrown towns.

The injurious consequences are manifold. The stated public indispensable services of the church being regularly performed, there is the *appearance* of church cultivation, and the consequent expectation of church fruits, in the district ; while, in fact, the cultivation is nothing more than apparent, and, of course, the fruits are not produced. The real living presence of an ambassador for Christ is not felt. The salt is without pungent aggressive savour; and that which should have been for the sweetening of the whole mass, by continual contact, remains insulated and unapplied. Better to have no present provision for such parishes, that the destitution might be fully and intolerably felt, and, in the end, effectually remedied; than to have a species of provision which serves to hide nakedness without communicating warmth, and thus operates, however unintentionally, to the permanent prejudice of those whom it seems partially to benefit. It is under cover of such procrastinating palliations, that a population, unmanaged, and now on the eve of becoming unmanageable, has been permitted to grow up around us. The efforts of the church, with her

present resources, are abortive ; the plausibilities of dissent from a system so practically inefficient, are numerous ; and the peace of neighbourhoods, and the good order of the community, are at stake.

Any attempt to remedy this evil by an increase of the smaller livings derived from an appropriation to any practical extent of a portion of cathedral property, or from an equalisation, however judicious, with some livings of large annual income, cannot be contemplated by its most sanguine advocates, as anything better than a prolongation of a palliation, wholly inadequate to meet the real exigences of the case.¹

The net annual value of all the benefices in England and Wales is 3,055,451*l.*

The number of curates employed by resident and

¹ The net value of the Archiepiscopal and Episcopal Sees, is 160,292*l.*

Of Collegiate and Cathedral Churches, 208,289*l.*

Separate revenues of Dignitaries, 66,455*l.*

The total net value of Ecclesiastical revenues of all descriptions in England and Wales is 3,490,487*l.*

The Church revenues, before inquiry, were said by her enemies to be 20,000,000*l.* per annum. In the course of inquiry she was charged with possessing 10,000,000*l.* And even now, honourable Members of Parliament are found, who are not ashamed to state her revenues at 7,000,000*l.* per annum.

It is obvious from this, that no improved appropriation of ecclesiastical revenues, nor tax upon benefices, above 300*l.* per annum ; could *of itself* add much to the efficiency of the Church.

Its consequences, however, upon the nation, (if done cordially and in time,) and thereby inevitably upon the Legislature, would be incalculable.

non-resident incumbents, is 5,230, all paid out of the above net value. These, added to the incumbents themselves, give a total of 15,948 clergymen. If this net annual value of all the benefices were distributed amongst them in equal portions, not one of them would have 200*l.* per annum. No, there is no effectual remedy but in large and liberal endowments by the state; which should be accompanied by a condition strictly enforced by every bishop; that no man having charge of a school be eligible to a cure of souls, and that no man with cure of souls be allowed to hire himself as an assistant in a school, or to take pupils into his house, or in any other way pledge himself to other than ministerial occupation.

6. A sixth cause, hindering the practical efficiency of the church, may be traced to the existing arrangements for the appointment of our bishops.

I speak of necessity briefly, and of practical results. There is a mixture in our present system, the effect of which is in no small degree injurious. There is an appearance, at least, of disingenuousness, which is repugnant to the British character; and which generates a feeling of reserve in the attachment of enlightened laymen, and thereby deprives us of much cordiality of support. There is the *name* of election of their bishop, continued to the dean and chapter of the diocese, while the impending penalty of a *premunire* for refusing to choose the nominee of the crown, renders it little more than a name. This, as might have been ex-

pected, is a fruitful source of taunt and reproach amongst our enemies. Neither is this all. It is a source of pain and grief to ourselves. We lament exceedingly the moral effect upon themselves, as well as upon others ; of a grave and venerable body being assembled, avowedly, and solemnly, before the church and the world, and in the sight of God, to make a choice ; when in point of fact they have, and know they have, no choice. True indeed it is, that by braving the threatened *premunire*, they might *bonâ fide* choose ; but to justify such a proceeding, the case must be flagrant to a degree scarcely conceivable in the present state of society ; and were even such a case to occur, we have no right to expect from any body of men the deliberate martyrdom of such a risk.

The church should not be exposed to the sarcasm contained in the *congé d'élire* as it now stands ; but one of two things should be done—either the nomination of bishops should belong directly and at once to the crown, (as in the case of the Irish bishops it does,) or, the statute of Henry VIII., involving a recusant chapter in the extreme penalties of a *premunire* should be repealed. In other words, the cathedral clergy should have either a real choice, or a real deliverance from the appearance of a choice.

So far I anticipate no objection in any correct mind. For whatever difference of opinion may exist as to which of the two methods it would be most judicious honestly to adopt ; it will, I think,

be admitted by all who esteem it a christian duty to avoid even the appearance of evil; that the present mixture of methods, containing at least the appearance of disingenuousness, ought not to be continued.

There is not, I believe, any form of prayer, specially appointed to be used at a *congé d'érire*; but it would be painful to contemplate such an election, even in appearance, conducted by such a body of venerable clergy, wholly without prayer for divine guidance and practical wisdom; and if there be any such prayer, under the known circumstances, and already determined result of the case, our feelings, in the contemplation of it, become more painful still.

On the subject of a preference between the two methods, I am constrained to differ from many of my brethren who have spoken and written strongly on behalf of the independence of the church. From what is called the independence of the church, as some of the writers now alluded to understand it, I would anticipate nothing, in the sequel, but the prostration of the civil power under ecclesiastical usurpation. I am aware, that many look upon this as altogether chimerical; but I have already assigned reasons for believing the danger real; and in the degree of influence, as regards temporal matters, already acquired by certain of the clergy, who, within the last few years, have boldly asserted what may emphatically be called high church, yes, dominant church principles; we are supplied with a

significant and seasonable (I trust it may prove effectual) warning. The animus of the party in question towards dissenters, is abundantly obvious. The only permanent safety for what dissenters esteem and extol as religious liberty, is to be found in a national establishment, which restrains, and in fact prohibits, ecclesiastical usurpation. And yet the dissenters of England, as if under suicidal infatuation, are rushing, with all enthusiasm, to the destruction of their own shield. They feel the present pressure of our establishment, and vainly suppose that its removal would leave them free. But can they not look a little further, and discern the gathering cloud of *high churchism*, working, as in former ages it worked, upon the awakened anxieties, the fostered superstitions, (not now in lying legends too absurd for credulity itself, but in exaggerated ascriptions of mystical power to the sacraments of the church,) and the self-righteous performances and liberalities of sinful men? Already from that cloud we hear murmurs of church independence; already something very like defiances of the civil power to damage the inherent prerogatives of the church. And most assuredly, were the equilibrium of our national establishment dissolved, that cloud would gather blackness, and eventually burst with the thunders of a substantial and coercive excommunication against all schismatics. The dissenters may rest assured, that if our establishment (which I will for distinction sake call Cranmerism) has been felt by them as a whip; the

revival of *Laudism* would be felt by them as scorpions ; and not by them only. None could escape punishment, but by submission. Both swords would again be wielded by clerical hands.

This, and every approach to this, and every avoidable risk of an approach to this, must be deprecated by all the value we set upon civil liberty, and clerical purity. And therefore I cannot hesitate to give my opinion, that upon the whole, as most calculated permanently to retain the king and the priest, in the respective places of supremacy and subordination assigned to them in the word of God ; it would be a great improvement to abolish the *congé d'élier* altogether, and to give the selection of bishops from amongst the presbyters of the church, entirely and absolutely to the crown.

What ! (it will be exclaimed by some,) now ! when the prime minister, who wields the patronage of the crown, may be an enemy of the church ; a voluntary in church polity, an Arian, or Socinian, or Romanist in doctrine, or an infidel, who proclaims a man as little responsible for the opinions he entertains, as for the height of his stature, or the shape or colour of his countenance ! Should such a man have the selection of bishops ?

I feel the force of the objection, and of the anomalous state of things which gives rise to it. Still I am deeply penetrated with the conviction that the greater danger is on the other side. The prime minister, whatever he may be personally or politically, is in this matter the executive of THE

CROWN : and I am thankful to think, that even in this age of levelling obliteration, when so many features of our national Protestantism, traced in the blood of our reforming forefathers, have been effaced ; there yet remains, *esto perpetua !* a thoroughly unchanged, a scripturally Protestant coronation oath.

It is indeed anomalous, and inconsistent in the highest degree, that this should remain ; but so it does. We are told with surpassing triumph, on every side, that political disabilities on account of religious belief are done away with for ever ; that by the repeal of the Test Acts, and the passing of the Emancipation Bill, the reformed dissenter on the one side, of all denominations, that is of any creed or no creed ; and the unreformed Romanist on the other, who believes what the church believes, without knowing, or having any possibility of ascertaining, what that is—all, all are now happily and equally eligible to offices of influence, and trust, and emolument, and distinction in the state. But see ! on this flat field of view, so boastingly exhibited, there remains a provoking elevation still. The sovereign of England, the representative of sovereignty in Ireland, and the noble and learned lords on the woolsacks, in both countries, *must still be members of the established church.* A mockery of religious liberty, exclaims the dissenter, who is honest enough to be consistent—an insult to the old religion, exclaims the Romanist, who is too sincerely impatient to be politic—while we hail it as

"A lingering homage to forsaken truth."

A citadel of which (after an experience of the lower breaches in our settlement of 1688) we trust England will not suffer herself to be deprived—by force or fraud, by storming party, or underminers.

The crown is sworn Protestant, and sworn church. And the value, to civil liberty, of the selection of bishops by the crown, may in some degree be appreciated, by the determination evinced by the Papal hierarchy in Ireland, that the crown of England should not have even a veto in the selection of their bishops. They have thus retained an ecclesiastical independence fraught with danger to civil liberty, and of course to the prerogatives of the crown. For the rightful authority of the British crown in this matter, Mr. Pitt contended; Mr. Canning in the commencement of his advocacy of emancipation contended; and every statesman who values the independence of his sovereign should contend: to guard against *an imperium in imperio* such as we now see in actual operation, under the inimitably skilful direction of a prelacy appointed by a foreign potentate, and exercising their influence by a priesthood, to whom the progress of liberal legislation has supplied a master key, unlocking without violence the various doors of our political mansion, and locating their selected instruments, Protestants as well as Romanists, (and a suitable Protestant is for the present more desirable, because less suspicious,) for gradual encroachment, at the turning point of every national strong-

hold. Our hope of safety, under God, lies not in restricting the prerogative of the crown, in reference to the national clergy, but in magnifying that prerogative; yes, and in extending it, as it ought to be extended, over every bishop, of every name, within the wide range of her Majesty's dominions. Why should any man be allowed to exercise the inevitable authority of a bishop, over British subjects, himself independent of the British crown? If the church insist on *such* independence; the state should take security against them, by some disabling or restricting statutes.

But I must forbear.

Vast and paramount as the consideration of eternity ought to be, with every reasonable immortal creature; and all-sufficient therefore as an appeal ought to be, on behalf of our church, if urged with sole reference to the spiritual instruction and preparation of the people; it is nevertheless lawful in itself, and may prove useful to some, to add, that what affects the religious character and feelings of men, must also affect, and very powerfully, the political institutions, and of course the best temporal interests, of the country.

A favourite topic among the adversaries of the church, is, that religion is wholly unconnected with polities. This is urged honestly on one side, and hypocritically on the other: honestly by some dissenters who advocate the exclusively voluntary system, and do not seem to be in the least aware of its inevitable consequences: and hypocritically

by the advocates of papal supremacy, who affect to confine the claim to spiritual things, and abjure all intention of interference with the politics of the nations. But the separation is impracticable. Religion of some kind, and political consequences, are as inseparable in this world, as soul and body in a living man.

Man, as an intelligent creature and free agent, is the subject of a *moral* government—that is, a government which acts, not by force properly so called, but by motives. The will is influenced to choose or refuse, and the actions follow as the legitimate results. The mind is the seat of motives, and the body of actions. Thus, motive and action are related to one another, as cause and effect. Is it possible to separate cause and effect? Clearly not. For if effects be not produced, causes are no longer causes; and if causes be indeed causes, then effects must be produced, and separation is impossible. An autumnal storm is a cause, and a scattering among the sear and yellow leaves of the forest is an effect. The voracity of the vulture is a cause, and his gorging over a carcass is an effect. The fierceness of the hungry tiger is a cause, and springing upon his prey is an effect. Gravitation is a cause, and the orbit of a planet is an effect. And as in external nature, so also in the world of morals, causes and effects are inseparable. The mind is the seat of causes, the body of effects. Infuriated jealousy is a cause; murder is an effect. Envy and malice are causes; mischief and strife are

effects. Covetousness is a cause ; theft, forgery, and kindred actions are effects. Supernatural terror is a cause ; superstitious slavery is an effect. And if it be true, as undeniably it is, that He who presides over the autumnal storm, is thereby master of the leaves of the forest ; and that he who presides over the principle or law of gravitation, is thereby master of the orbit of the planet; it is equally undeniable that He who presides over man's *motives* is thereby master of man's *actions*; that he who gets possession of man's mind, becomes thereby possessed of man's body. He who can excite to jealousy, can lead to murder ; he who can rouse envy and malice, can perpetuate mischief and strife ; he who can stimulate to covetousness, can produce theft and forgery ; he who can cause supernatural terror, can effect superstitious slavery ; and he who can absolve from allegiance, can, when he pleases, when it suits him, originate rebellion. A man's religion is in his mind and motives ; a man's politics are in his body and actions. What, then, is spiritual supremacy ? It is supremacy over mind, over motives, over *causes* ; and is it to be separated from supremacy over *effects* ? No ! Supremacy in religion involves, ever has involved, and ever must involve, supremacy in politics.

The great priestly usurper of Christendom knows this well, and consequently veils the arrogance of his pretensions to universal dominion behind the mask of a merely *spiritual* primacy. Temporal princes are less alarmed by a claim which is con-

fined to spirituals, while, nevertheless, if the claim be admitted, temporal results are most effectually secured. Yield to the pope supremacy over mind and motives, spiritual supremacy; and when you have thus enthroned him as lord paramount over moral *causes*, by what unnatural or supernatural dislocation is it, that you can prevent his rule over moral *effects*? Having conceded to him the dominion of *motives*, how can you withhold from him the dominion of *actions*? Giving him free course for the excitement of spiritual terror in the confessional, and how can you deprive him of its legitimate consequence in producing actual slavery at the registries, at the polling-booths—yes, and in the senate-house? Give him supremacy over religion, the inmate of the mind, the originator of the motives; and he *has*, whether you design to give it to him or not, substantial supremacy, to be wielded at his will over all the politics of the world.

The free institutions of our country are therefore involved in the question now before us. Under the protection of our national establishment, they have stood and grown to unexampled prosperity, and secured to our country unexampled peace. Deprived of that protection, they must give way, and fall. This will appear, whether we consider the fundamental principle on which they are all based; or the detailed instrumentality, by which now, more than ever, they are carried into practical operation.

It may be truly said that our whole political

framework rests upon that great scriptural principle, that “an oath for confirmation is an end of all strife.” Everything turns upon this. By this the witness is tested in his evidence ; by this the jury are solemnized in their verdict — character, property, life itself, and surely, therefore, national prosperity and peace—all rest upon the sacredness of an oath.

And upon what does that rest ? Unquestionably, as regards the bulk of the community, it rests upon our national establishment of Christianity, reformed from the innovations of tyranny heaped upon it in the middle ages, and urging upon the people the entire word of the living God, in their native language. Remove the mounds of your establishment, and what protection have you against the incursions of socialism, which mocks at human responsibility, and could of course make use of oaths only as a passport to mischievous influence—or of Romanism, which accounts oaths against ecclesiastical utility, to be no oaths, but perjuries ; and therefore could not be bound by what *you* would call oaths ; in any case, where the convenient unwritten traditions of an usurping hierarchy determined otherwise ? No ! If you would preserve a *national conscience*, without which it is manifest this great fundamental principle of all your institutions cannot continue binding, you must maintain, and maintaining, you must extend, our national church.

Again. The political power of the state is now lodged in the middle classes of the people. This

cannot be denied, and it is vain, and worse than vain, to attempt to conceal it. They far outnumber the upper classes, and they possess the elective franchise, to which is the last appeal of political power. How can they be induced to wield this weapon in defence and support of our free institutions ? Their temptation is, to get rid of all superiors. The instigators of their bad passions enlarge on the asserted rights of man, and preach equality. The infidel circulates his poison, saying that man has nothing to look for, beyond this world ; why then should he be patient in a lower station here, if he can combine with others like himself to pull down those above him ? Man is but man; why then should there be a difference between man and man ? Why should one walk, and another ride ? one sit at ease in a warm luxurious house, and eat and drink in abundance without working, and another labour hard in the cold fields, and not have enough to eat after all ?

It is easy to smile contemptuously at the gross absurdity : but we have seen and heard too much of socialism and chartism, to be able to join in either the contempt or the smile. And where is the antidote ? Only in your national Christianity. In vain will you inculcate peace here, unless it be in connexion with holy and tranquillising hope hereafter. In vain will you reason politically; in vain will you tell such men, when under any special destitution, that when once a kingdom breaks the bonds of contented subordination, it takes three inevitable steps

—rebellion, anarchy, despotism ; that if they would avoid the sword of tyranny, they must be content to bear the rod of subordination. In vain you will remind them, that cold and hunger are not the only feelings they have to consult : they love their wives, they love their children. They may easily go farther than they intend. When the mansion of the peer is rifled, who will respect the premises of the ten-pound householder ? The unlawful tumult of to-day, in which they extort their neighbour's money, opens a ready door for the unlawful tumult of to-morrow, in which their associates in violence may seize with ruffian grasp their domestic treasure—more precious far than gold—their wife or daughter. In vain you contrast the present evils they complain of, the occasional insults of some unfeeling master, or the occasional pinchings of bitter but honest poverty; with the desolations of the ruthless revolutionary adulterer, profaning the sanctuary of their hitherto sacred homes. However these and such arguments may work for a moment upon their feelings, there is nothing in them to renew the character, and thus arm them against renewed temptation. In vain shall the conservative implore, if the Christian do not teach. In vain shall the government coerce, if the church do not sanctify.

If then you allow the dimensions of the church to be largely overgrown by the population of the country, you are cultivating the discordant elements of national convulsion. You are exposing yourself to the poisoned arrows ; because, while the body to

be protected has enlarged on the right side and the left, the protecting shield has remained at a given and most inadequate size. If you would keep the nation safe, you must keep the church national.

And how shall the nation retain her missionary character, her glorious position of christian usefulness in the world ; if the peace and order and liberty of her christian institutions at home be sacrificed ? How shall she give stability to Christianity, in her wide-spread colonies, by consolidating the clergy of their infant churches under the subordinating management of episcopal authority ; if the national aspect of her home episcopacy be given up ? How vast, how overwhelming are the interests involved in England's stability —in the key-stone of the arch of that stability, in England's established church ! The peace of nations, with all the consequences to civilisation, art, science, literature, commerce, and these throughout all the world, nay, and beyond this world, the eternal interests of countless immortal souls ! O ! how shall the mighty theme be set before you ?

Alas, how inadequate are words to convey lively impressions ! It is so, even in things of time and sense. Were I pleading for the bodies of men only, and urging the high duty of providing, and supplying, and multiplying hospitals and infirmaries ; in vain should I attempt by words alone to reach the true power of the subject over the human heart. But if I could conduct you, as spectators, amongst those grievous cases, which, in the inscrutable

mystery of God's dealing with our world, are perpetually occurring ; the bed of abject penury and protracted sickness, with its tainted atmosphere of infection ; the complicated fracture, with its accompanying moans of agony ; the ruthless bruise, which has reduced the exquisitely wonderful structure of a human limb into one livid mass of threatening putrefaction ; if I could make you eye-witnesses of how impossible it is for the private habitations of the wretched sufferers to meet the exigencies of the case ; if I could show you some of those scenes of retired misery, where the gentle hand of brotherly kindness never enters—where the voice of compassion never ministers even the cheap mitigation of sympathy—but where, in the dreariness of neglected solitude, every dire visitation wears a face of sublime horror ; where famine is the consequence of arrested toil, where the covering of the helpless sufferer, his only covering from the penetrating cold, is bartered by his afflicted wife or daughter, for the last needful support of their existence ; where the very source of tears is dried up ; where deep despair, extorting the language of impatience, perhaps of imprecation, adds to the horrors of dying sickness the aggravated features of revolting blasphemy ;—and then, in contrast, if I could lead you into one of our hospitals, those glorious triumphs of humanity over selfishness—if, passing from ward to ward, I could say to you, Behold ! here the loathsome wound is closely and carefully inspected ; here the fractured bones and torn tendons, and lacerated flesh, are laid in their

respective places with precision ; here the tortures of the frightful operation are soothed by the voice of kindness ; here the infectious effluvia is patiently and heroically endured—and all this with the affectionate tenderness of a nurse, combined with the scientific skill of a master, and the unflinching firmness of purpose and performance which arises out of well-placed confidence in that science and that skill ; and then, while your hearts were filled with admiring gratitude for such blessings, if I could hurry you away to some populous city, without an hospital, or where all the existing hospitals are filled, and all the existing surgeons more than occupied ; and could show you the consequences, the inevitable consequences of having no refuge for the helpless victims of sudden and fracturing calamity, the worse than terrific counterpart of a neglected battle-field—the shrieks of the falling, the moans of the expiring, the lingering agonies of the maimed and mutilated, putrefying to an untimely and neglected death, under the beams of that sun, which, at the same moment, would be lighting us to our daily round of unnumbered enjoyments ! then, then, when I asked for funds to multiply hospitals, and remunerate officiating surgeons—then, instead of the cold calculation in the head which lingers, loath to part with the extorted guinea, we would see the warm undeliberating profusion which does justice to the emotions of the heart.

And now, when, instead of the perishing bodies, I consider the never-dying souls of our fellow-

countrymen, of our fellow-creatures, in all countries—wounded, and bruised, and fractured under the crushing power of the devil—exhibiting a frightful spectacle, full of envy, debate, deceit, malignity—infancy without baptism, youth without christian influence, manhood without self-control, old age without consolation, death without hope, and an eternity of awakened susceptibility to the torture of conscious opposition to God—no native power of release or remedy, but, on the contrary, madness after their idols, fostering the fatal diseases, tearing open the festering wounds, quaffing the poisoned cup, and with all the frantic enthusiasm of a band of maniacs, rushing on their own inevitable ruin—and when in the face of this fearful plague, this mass of moral corruption putrefying to everlasting damnation, I consider the glorious all-sufficient remedy for fallen man provided in the gospel,—the redeeming love of God in Jesus Christ, affecting at once the divine government and the human character; the atonement *made* that God might be just, and *manifested* that man might be sanctified; the commandment of the Most High that this should be preached to every creature; the mission of the accredited surgeons, the ambassadors for Christ, the heralds of peace and mercy beseeching sinners to be reconciled to God; the happy effects produced wherever this mission is faithfully fulfilled.

“ The wretch who once sang wildly, danced, and laughed,
And sucked in dizzy madness with his draught;

Has wept a silent flood ; reversed his ways,
Is sober, meek, benevolent ; and prays :
Feeds sparingly, communicates his store,
Abhors the craft he gloried in before,
And he who stole, has learned to steal no more"—

the connexion providentially established between England and the world, between England's church and the world's Christianity—O that my voice could penetrate amongst England's commons, and England's peers, and England's royal council, and awfully responsible executive ; yes, and with mingled solemnity of respect, and earnestness of affectionate entreaty, could reach the throne itself, while I plead for determined measures on behalf of England's church !

Half measures are as unreasonable as they are unscriptural. If our subject be deserving of attention at all, it is deserving of supreme attention. Is man an immortal being, or is he not ? If not, why affect even half measures ? Why have a church at all, or a Bible at all ? If man's existence end with what we call death ; then, let us boldly and consistently adopt the maxim of the ancient epicurean infidel—fit maxim for the beasts that perish—*eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*. But if man be indeed immortal : if enduring consciousness and sensitiveness be inevitable : if there be everlasting hallelujahs, and everlasting wailings ; then, why rest satisfied with *half* measures ? Why pause, why hesitate, why parley ? I speak the words of truth and soberness when I say, that

there is no consistent medium between the very depth of avowed infidelity on the one side, and the holy enthusiasm of fervent devoted religion, on the other. If there be neither God, nor devil, nor immortality ; why not say so, and feel so, and act accordingly ? Why those inward shrinkings from the lash of your own conscience ? Why those irresolute tremblings in the indulgence of your flesh ? Go to ; ye who pretend to be infidels ; you are paltry cowards ; you dare not to act out consistently your own profession. But if there be indeed a God, a glorious God of spotless holiness, redeeming love, and sanctifying grace ; and if there be indeed a devil, and a tormenting host of his fallen associates ; and if there be indeed an immortality for man : then, why not say so, and feel so, and act accordingly ? Why those haltings on the course ? Why that coldness in the cause, that reserve, that prudent caution not to commit yourselves ? You have heard that extremes are bad, imprudent, dangerous. It is so in things temporal. But here ! extremes are sensible, and extremes alone. A medium is madness. If Jehovah be God, then *follow him*—but if Baal, then follow him. There are but two consistent characters in the world—the bold-faced Atheist, and the enthusiastic Christian.

THE END.

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